


**The edible museum: Exploring foodways as sociomuseological practice  
in Kayamandi, South Africa**

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Dissertation presented for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences,  
Department of Visual Arts at the University of Stellenbosch

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December 2017





2

Baby Soft

fresh white

BABY SOFT MINI  
2-PLY  
TOILET ROLLS  
9 per pack





## DECLARATION

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Date: December 2017

## ABSTRACT

Food is one of the most fundamental aspects related to human well-being. The ways in which food moves through community social systems, through foodways, are implicated in complex networks of privilege and marginalisation, and are marked by sensory encounters. Sociomuseology places the well-being of communities, and by implication cross-cultural tolerance and understanding, at the forefront of its approach to meaning making. Sociomuseology could be a transformative museological practice through which to explore sensory encounters as experienced through foodways, as it seeks to make meaning of the complexity of these encounters towards community well-being. Such a practice could be especially relevant in the context of South Africa, where tensions between cultural cohesion and xenophobic violence have contributed to disenchantment with the democratic project of the "Rainbow Nation". To this end, the purpose of this research undertaking was to examine and document the foodways of the Kayamandi township, within its specific context as a marginalised community in post-apartheid South Africa, through a sociomuseological practice entitled the "Edible Museum".

Sensory theory, posthumanism and sociomuseology formed the theoretical framework through which the study was conducted. I followed an interpretive approach, informed by sensory ethnography and a diffractive methodology, in implementing an action research design, which consisted of group and individual interviews with participants based in Kayamandi. The study found that foodways are implicated in a direct way in the tension between the ambition of cultural cohesion and misunderstanding of others as it emerges in the context of Kayamandi and broader Stellenbosch. The ability of food to speak through a sensory and embodied language was observed to highlight the ways in which people interacted with each other, especially across cultural boundaries. Moreover, the ability of food to engage with disruption, through the senses, and the way in which this disruption could be positively mediated through sociomuseological interactions, was found to be key. It is through sensory disruptions that are enacted towards bodily transformations that foodways can be enlisted towards the facilitation of potential cross-cultural exchange through a museological mediation, which speaks in an embodied language. The proposition of the Edible Museum thus functions as a sociomuseological approach that could be followed towards the facilitation of cross-cultural tolerance and understanding through making sensory meaning of

foodways. The Edible Museum is also a process that can critique and transform the museological practices of those museums that struggle to remain relevant in a post-apartheid, and I would argue, posthuman, context where the necessity for cross-cultural tolerance and understanding through alternative modalities and knowledge systems is revealed. This study has therefore contributed to the expansion of dialogue concerning cross-cultural interaction and tolerance in the museological and food studies fields, through the novel perspective of a sensory approach to foodways.

## OPSOMMING

Voedsel is een van die fundamenteelste faktore wat met menslike welstand verband hou. Die wyses waarop voedsel deur sosiale stelsels in 'n gemeenskap beweeg, deur voedselpraktyke, word in komplekse netwerke van bevoorregting en marginalisering geïmpliseer, en word deur sensoriese ontmoetings gekenmerk. Sosiomuseologie plaas die welstand van gemeenskappe, en by implikasie interkulturele verdraagsaamheid en begrip, voorop in sy benadering tot betekenisgeving. Sosiomuseologie kan 'n transformatiewe praktyk wees waardeur sensoriese ontmoetings wat deur voedselpraktyke ervaar word, verken kan word omdat dit poog om betekenis te skep binne die kompleksiteit van hierdie ontmoetings wat gemeenskapswelstand nastreef. So 'n praktyk kan besonder betekenisvol wees in Suid-Afrika, waar spanning tussen kulturele samehörigheid en xenofobiese geweld reeds bygedra het tot ontnugtering jeens die demokratiese projek van die "Reënboognasie". In die lig hiervan was die doel van hierdie navorsingsprojek om die voedselpraktyke van die Kayamandi-township te ondersoek en te dokumenteer binne die spesifieke konteks van Kayamandi as 'n gemarginaliseerde gemeenskap in post-apartheid Suid-Afrika, deur 'n sosiomuseologiese praktyk genaamd die "Eetbare Museum".

Sensoriese teorie, posthumanisme en sosiomuseologie was die teoretiese raamwerk waarteen die studie onderneem is. In die implementering van 'n aksienavorsingsontwerp is 'n interpretatiewe benadering gevolg wat gebaseer was op sensoriese etnografie en 'n diffraksie-metodologie. Groeps- en individuele onderhoude is gevoer met deelnemers wat in Kayamandi woon. 'n Direkte verband is gevind tussen voedselpraktyke en die spanning tussen die ambisie van kulturele kohesie en wanbegrip van ander soos dit binne die konteks van Kayamandi en die breër Stellenbosch na vore kom. Daar is waargeneem dat die vermoë wat voedsel het om deur 'n sensoriese en beliggaamde taal te praat die wyses waarop interaksie tussen mense plaasvind, uitlig – veral oor kultuurgrense heen. Verder is gevind dat die vermoë van voedsel om ontwrigting uit te lok, deur die sinne, asook die wyse waarop sosiomuseologiese interaksies sulke ontwrigting positief kan medieer, van fundamentele belang is. Dit is deur sensoriese ontwrigtings wat uitgevoer word om liggaamlike transformasies te bereik dat voedselpraktyke ingespan kan word om potensiële interkulturele interaksie te fasiliteer deur 'n museologiese mediasie wat in 'n beliggaamde taal praat. Die voorstel van 'n Eetbare Museum funksioneer dus as 'n sosiomuseologiese benadering wat gevolg kan word ten einde interkulturele verdraagsaamheid en begrip te fasiliteer deurdat voedselpraktyke

sensoriese betekenis kan skep. Die Eetbare Museum is ook 'n proses wat die museologiese praktyke van daardie museums wat sukkel om relevant te bly in 'n post-apartheidkonteks – en ek sou argumenteer in 'n post-menslike konteks – waarbinne die noodsaaklikheid van kruiskulturele verdraagsaamheid en begrip deur alternatiewe modaliteite en kennis onthul word. Hierdie studie het dus bygedra tot die voorbereiding van dialoog oor interkulturele interaksie en verdraagsaamheid op die terrein van museologie en voedselstudies, deur die nuwe perspektief van 'n sensoriese benadering tot voedselpraktyke.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I extend my heartfelt thanks and gratitude to the residents of Kayamandi, both permanent and temporary, who played a role in my research and dissertation. Your willingness to assist, support and enlighten were indispensable, and your honesty and humility appreciated beyond measure. I will forever cherish the memories made and lessons learned during my many meals with all of you. *Enkosi kakhulu.*

I also wish to thank my supervisor Elmarie Costandius, for her constant dedication, guidance and encouragement. Funding from the National Research Foundation (NRF) for this research is gratefully acknowledged.

Lastly, to my friends and family who have supported and loved me unconditionally as I navigated the doctoral journey – thank you. To Bernhard: thank you for trusting me to venture into the unknown, for listening to my many rambling thoughts and for your endless supply of encouraging words. I love you.



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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ANC – African National Congress

DESC – Departmental Ethics Screening Committee

DNMP – Draft National Museums Policy

ICOM – International Committee of Museums

MINOM – Movement for a New Museology

MOFAD – Museum of Food and Drink

NBD – National Braai Day

PAC – Pan-Africanist Congress

RESHA – “Rewriting the socio-political history of the arts in Stellenbosch”

RHAS – “Rewriting history of the arts in Stellenbosch”

SAFL – Southern Africa Food Lab

UDF – United Democratic Front

VOC – Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie





Figure 1.1 – Aerial view of Stellenbosch and Kayamandi





Figure 1.2 – The township of Kayamandi

## CHAPTER 1 — ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The hub known as the Kayamandi<sup>1</sup> taxi rank is bustling with people, cars and stray dogs. House music booms from car stereos. The smell of acrid smoke hangs in the air, as female vendors prepare *smileys*<sup>2</sup> for lunchtime. Hungry school children arrive to buy large, oily *amagwinya*,<sup>3</sup> filled with neon pink polony<sup>4</sup> as a lunchtime snack. The sound of taxi honks clashes with the urgent squawks of chickens, their beady eyes pleading for life, as the street-side butcher seals their fate with a flick of a knife. For the uninitiated, this is a sensory overload. For many of the residents of Kayamandi, this is how food “happens”.

The study of foodways can be described as the act of examining the various ways in which food happens. Foodways are as complex as they are relational, informed by the dynamic interactions of social, material and environmental realities (following Dolphijn 2004). Folklorist Lucy M. Long explains that “foodways ... demonstrates the connectedness of all activities surrounding eating and identifies the ways in which it acquires meaningfulness for an individual” (2014: 223). As such, foodways can be considered as both a theoretical construct, as a way of understanding food, as well as referencing the specific ways through which these understandings take shape. Moreover, foodways require a sensory disposition towards understanding how food moves through these activities, as they are defined by the sensory evidence of culinary practices revealed through their “routes, sites, and landscapes” (Timothy & Ron 2013: 99).

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<sup>1</sup> Kayamandi is the predominantly ethnically African township on the northwestern boundary of central Stellenbosch, a town located in the Western Cape province of South Africa.

<sup>2</sup> A *smiley* is the colloquial name given to sheep’s head prepared on the fire. Its “smile” derives from the sinister grin the head appears to have when stripped of its skin.

<sup>2</sup> A *smiley* is the colloquial name given to sheep’s head prepared on the fire. Its “smile” derives from the sinister grin the head appears to have when stripped of its skin.

<sup>3</sup> *Amagwinya* is the isiXhosa name for a deep-fried dough dumpling, also known in the Afrikaans language as *vetkoek*.

<sup>4</sup> Polony is a highly processed, pork-based sausage product popular in South Africa.

Navigating foodways in this sense could be considered a manner of sensory documentation, of recording and mapping the meaningfulness of food. How does one, however, document the meaning of a subject which is so inherently sensory? Is it possible to “meaningfully” capture scent, taste and texture with text, or in our digital age, with Tweets or Instagrams? The “sensual turn” as proposed by David Howes has prompted several academics across the social sciences to depart from text- or visual-based methods of inquiry towards making meaning of the world through all of the senses (2003: 29). Thus it is through a sensory perspective that this dissertation will attempt to negotiate the meaningfulness of foodways in Kayamandi.

The purpose of this research undertaking was to examine the foodways of the Kayamandi township, within its specific cultural context as a marginalised space in post-apartheid South Africa. The current cultural climate in South Africa is one which is contested, given the tension between the post-1994 emphasis on cohesion through the development of a “Rainbow Nation”<sup>5</sup> and an emerging culture of violence as exhibited by recent waves of xenophobic attacks (Harris 2002). This tension is notably informed by a pervasive disenchantment with the democratic project of the “new” South Africa, and was more recently evidenced by protests on university campuses countrywide as part of the “#FeesMustFall” movement.<sup>6</sup> These types of tensions emerge most significantly in the context of townships, communities where the spatial and social legacies of apartheid have made a negative impact. Considering the understanding of townships as “communities”, according to Rassool, what was once considered a demarcation of legislated ethnicity, has now become a contested marker of struggle and at times empowerment (Rassool 2006: 312). In this sense, I would argue that a sociomuseological approach to understanding the foodways of the community of Kayamandi is relevant towards making meaning of the marginalisation often experienced by its residents.

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<sup>5</sup> Annie Coombes describes the “Rainbow Nation” concept in the context of considering ethnicity in post-apartheid South Africa: “The concept of the ‘rainbow nation’, promoted under Mandela’s government of national unity, was designed to mediate such a legacy and to foster national solidarity while accommodating ethnic diversity. Dubbed by some as the ‘Benetton effect’ the strategy was subject to similar charges of willful exclusion and naïve idealism and was not without its contradictions” (2004: 207).

<sup>6</sup> The “#FeesMustFall” movement mobilised students across the country to protest the proposed fee increases at universities in 2015. Protests caused disruptions across campuses and continued into the following academic year.

"Sociomuseology" is a term given to museological practice that considers the real and potential impact of the museum on broader society, specifically in the context of local communities. Although sociomuseology emerged from a particular set of socio-political and cultural conditions, as will be explained in Chapter 2, it can broadly be considered part of a growing professional and grassroots effort to "decentralise the traditional museum model" allowing "more nuanced understandings of what museums are and can be" to emerge (Onciul 2015: 5). Paula Assunção dos Santos argues that sociomuseology as a movement recognises the critical importance of considering culture as a means to contributing to the dialogue of development, and calls for the central role of museology within this dialogue, towards a more sustainable and humane society (2003:162). Given this philosophical base, sociomuseology thus considers the museum and society as inextricably linked towards the mutual development of well-being for communities, as they make meaning of the world around them. In South Africa, the need for museums to transform towards a sociomuseological approach is reflected in its Draft National Museums Policy (DNMP), where museums are encouraged to "Africanise" museum practice towards "revolutionary and evolutionary notions" (RSA DAC n.d.: 48). Such notions include, specifically, "finding alternative forms of preservation and memorialisation, particularly in ways that maximise the transfer of value to beneficiary communities, while minimising the cost to communities" (ibid.) Although attempts from governmental agencies towards transforming the museum sector are contested and must be questioned for the efficacy and legitimacy thereof, policies such as those quoted above are indicative of an industry-wide recognition of the need for alternative museological engagements that speak to communities' needs and their sustainable well-being.

Food and foodways are fundamental to human well-being. Every person must eat, in order to survive and live his or her life. The act of eating, however, is implicated in complex networks of privilege and marginalisation, and communities are often considered the playing field through which these acts are mediated. Considering the orientation of sociomuseology as engaging with cultural practices towards development of communities, the notion of foodways presents itself as a unique subject for exploration. A sociomuseological exploration of foodways could not only encourage engagement within a community itself, but could also allow for accepted modes of museological interaction to be challenged by the multi-sensory messiness of foodways, guided by the manners in which foodways are uniquely experienced in a community context.



Uniting foodways with museology may seem incongruous. Historically, the museum is fundamentally concerned with the practice of collecting objects for preservation and display to formulate an understanding of culture (Macdonald 2006b). Foodways, however, provide a different engagement with culture through actions involving eating, and the use of the visual, as well as the non-visual senses. They are often messy, dirty and intimate – completely antithetical to the clean, white space most acknowledge the museum to be.

The field of sensory studies has however attempted to begin to break down the theoretical glass cases of the museum, and in response, “contemporary museum professionals have started rethinking the multiple restrictions on the use of the senses in the museum and begun actively soliciting the senses instead” (Levent & Pascual-Leone 2014b: xvii). The vast majority of these solicitations, however positive, have focused on the tactile and auditory, with very few interventions allowing for a role for olfactory and taste perception (Levent & Pascual-Leone 2014b). The senses of taste and smell, however, have across academic disciplines been examined as powerful vehicles for meaning making (Howes 2003; Stoller 1997). Museology, it seems, has celebrated the inclusion of the hands and the ears to the neglect of the nose and tongue. As Mihalache argues, “the ability of taste to perform a pedagogical role and to inspire critical thinking has been generally overlooked in museums” (2014: 197). A deeper investigation of the value of the sense of taste and its implication in social dynamics, through museological practice, is warranted.

Food in museums, specifically, has only fairly recently begun to receive significant scholarly attention (Levent & Mihalache 2017a; Gothie 2015; Mihalache 2016, 2014). Many contemporary interpretations of food-focused topics in museums place emphasis on the social, material, or multisensorial experiences attached to food, without unpacking the complex web that lies beneath the surface of this experience. A deeper engagement with foodways in its complex entanglement could engage museum audiences with the integrated and sensorially informed social, economic, cultural and political realities implicated therein. The development of an “Edible Museum”, as proposed in this dissertation, seeks to answer the call for such complex engagement.

Irina Mihalache argues that an engagement with food and the sense of taste can both assist museums in expanding their educational paradigms and invite increased participation:

Taste is the ideal sense for an innovative participatory culture in museums because taste bridges the gap between personal experiences – each of us tastes food differently and intimately at a biological level – and collective meanings and values attached to certain regimes of taste (2014: 198).

Practices of eating thus create meaning as described by Long (2014), not only for individuals but also for communities. More importantly, however, “experiencing a museum through taste could increase the public’s cultural sensibilities through an awareness of the role that food and its taste plays in producing stereotypes and assumptions about different cultures, including our own” (Mihalache 2014: 198).

Stereotypes as expressions of cultural intolerance are an often subliminal feature of the experience of foodways across cultural communities, where tolerance can be defined as the “respect, acceptance and appreciation” for cultural difference (UNESCO 1995: [Online]). Tolerance as practised through taste, is a complex endeavour (see Bryson 1996), and should be considered for its disruptive potential, not only in its sensory capacity in mediating difference through the body, but for its ability to transform such sensory interpretations to emotive perceptions about communities perceived as different. A sociomuseological practice, then, which places well-being of communities, and by implication tolerance and cross-cultural understanding, at the forefront of its approach to meaning making, is an ideal platform through which to explore the complexities of taste as experienced through foodways.

Tolerance and cross-cultural understanding as expressions of social justice are critical considerations of museological approaches such as sociomuseology, where community well-being is at stake. In the context of South Africa, such approaches are also implicated in a discourse of decolonisation of the museum institution, as is echoed by the DNMP’s call to “Africanise” museum practice (RSA DAC n.d.: 48). Given the particularly traumatic history of the country, museums occupy a complex and fraught position in the heritage landscape, functioning as symbolic remnants of colonial oppression, as sites of difficult memory but also as spaces of celebratory national reinvention. Some would argue that attempts to decolonise South

African museum practice “must involve assisting our communities in addressing the legacies of historical unresolved grief...by speaking the hard truths of colonialism and thereby creating spaces for healing and understanding” (Lonetree 2012: 5). Such difficult museological practices might possibly be made more digestible through the sensory mediation that interaction with foodways brings, especially when occurring between communities of cultural difference, across Otherness.

A sociomuseological practice that engages with a decolonising discourse necessarily must consider its interpretation of the Other. In the context of this research, Otherness is a complex term which, although historically implying cultural difference in binary terms, should rather be considered as “an entangled relation of difference” (Barad 2007: 236), as posthumanism would propose. For this reason, posthumanism is a core part of the theoretical framework of this study, as it allows for a complex interpretation of decolonising and sociomuseological approaches, specifically as it prompts an understanding of Otherness which brings that Other (uncomfortably) close to the self. Engaging with Otherness through foodways also allows, as Krishnendu Ray argues in the context of eating, to “hold the other at some distance with the table in between, so the relationship can be subject to mutual discussion and negotiation. Eating allows intimacy but not too much of it...” (2016: 31). However the intimacy of ingesting the food of an Other complicates these negotiations, where sensorially-informed bodily transformations are enacted through the consumption of foods. Hence Otherness in this research context will be explored as a complex negotiation between Others, selves, and the foodways that entangle these bodies toward each other but also that push them apart. The awareness of the role of food in shaping both positive and negative perceptions of cultural communities and Others, and the way these perceptions are enacted between people, environments and material foods, are crucial to the investigation of foodways in Kayamandi within the context of Stellenbosch.

Given its location and socio-economic profile, Kayamandi occupies a marginal space in relation to central Stellenbosch. Many life-long residents of Stellenbosch’s central and comparably affluent neighbourhoods have never crossed the boundary beyond George Blake and Masitandane streets to enter Kayamandi, which is located less than four kilometres from the town centre. This township is home to a predominantly African, isiXhosa-speaking community, including a number of immigrants from other African countries, such as Zimbabwe, Somalia and Nigeria. While Stellenbosch is considered a gastronomic hub for those who can

afford its many well-regarded fine dining establishments on scenic wine farms, Kayamandi is not necessarily included in this definition. For many of its residents, its foodways are defined by “hand-to-mouth”. Food insecurity is pervasive, evidenced by the number of feeding schemes operated by non-governmental and faith-based organisations in the community (see Haysom 2011). This is not to say that Kayamandi does not have a vibrant and functioning food culture, but rather that the socio-economic realities of its foodways add a significant layer of complexity to understanding the broader food system as it connects disparate cultural communities. It is this complexity that a sociomuseological approach could assist to unpack and acknowledge, towards the possible facilitation of cross-cultural tolerance and understanding.

## 1.2 BACKGROUND

This doctoral study is an extension of a project started by Professor Elmarie Costandius in 2014, entitled “Rewriting the socio-political history of the arts in Stellenbosch (*RESHA*)”. The objective of this project was formulated as “the collection and documenting of the arts that were, and in some cases, are still currently practiced in [marginalised] communities during the apartheid years in the Stellenbosch region” (Costandius 2013: 3). The need for such research stems from the acknowledgement that Stellenbosch’s history is popularly (and problematically) defined by its white, European traditions and neglects to tell the stories of the many other cultural communities that shape its socio-political history. The project received funding from the National Research Foundation under the title “Rewriting history of the arts in Stellenbosch” (*RHAS*) in 2015, of which this doctoral research forms a part.

The *RHAS* project is broadly attempting to initiate a reconstructive archiving project, which through community engagement and interaction will begin to document the undocumented narratives of Stellenbosch history. The aim is to set collection and community interaction processes in motion to facilitate an ongoing cultural collaboration platform. This platform could then serve as a resource available not only to academics but the general public as part of an educational tool for critical citizenship<sup>7</sup> as it fosters cross-

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<sup>7</sup> Critical citizenship is based on the critical ability to understand, live and practise shared values such as tolerance, human rights, democracy, and social justice (Johnson & Morris 2010: 77-78; Nussbaum 2002).

cultural tolerance and understanding. The long-term aim of the *RHAS* archive is to establish a new model for archiving in South Africa, starting with the greater Stellenbosch region.

In considering the greater aims of the *RHAS* project towards destabilising a Eurocentric narrative of Stellenbosch history, initial exploratory research led to a thematic consideration of the various cultural expressions that need to be included in such an archive. Where themes such as visual arts, music and dance immediately arose, I also considered the possibility of including food, which is often a more hidden or intangible expression of cultural heritage. The documentation of food and foodways presented a particularly unique challenge, as it could problematise modes of inquiry traditionally associated with the archive and museum. Many scholars have sought to destabilise the hegemony of vision in the context of meaning making in the museum (see Edwards, Gosden & Phillips 2006a; Bennett 2006, 1995; Hooper-Greenhill 2000; Vergo 1989; Wright 1989). The possibility of engaging with alternative modes of sensory perception towards the construction of a more relevant archival or even museological approach to foodways presented an opportunity to contribute to a small yet growing body of scholarship on the subject.

Food would, moreover, present a unique lens to the process of democratising the narrative of Stellenbosch heritage. Through my initial research and reflections, I became aware that the popular narrative of its foodways centered on a dominant and Eurocentric Cape Dutch identity, while neglecting its rich entanglement with the food narratives of its marginalised communities. Gastronomy as a discourse in Stellenbosch is supported by a privileged culture of restaurants, large retail supermarkets, artisan food markets and cafés, all of which contribute to the Eurocentric narrative of its foodways. This is particularly evident in the emphasis on culinary tourism in the region, known for its historical “Winelands”. Grundlingh and Scott argue that “heritage production tends to privilege those aspects of the past that are relatively easy to project and commodify” (2012: 241), to the neglect of the “darker” narratives that would complicate these projections. The dispossessed, marginalised and excluded communities of Stellenbosch are rarely recognised for their role in the development of the region’s gastronomic heritage and its contemporary commodification, nor their own narratives recognised as forming a part of this heritage.



This lack of transparent engagement on a narrative level also translates to a lack of commensal<sup>8</sup> engagement between these disparate cultural communities. Prior to conducting my research in Kayamandi, I had had very little interaction with the township. I also imagined that many privileged, white residents of Stellenbosch, including myself at the time, regarded Kayamandi as a community defined by poverty and crime. The majority of the existing cross-cultural interactions within Kayamandi would then revolve around activities related to volunteering or doing charity work, as was also true in my own case. Given its association with poverty, and related food insecurity, Kayamandi is rarely considered a gastronomic destination. The only exception to this rule is witnessed through the rising development of township tourism, which can be understood as a disputed *mélange* of “educational and cultural tourism, heritage, justice tourism, local development, pro-poor tourism and dark tourism” (Butler 2010: 15; see 3.5). Through township tourism, however, commensal exchange is limited to a few sites where interaction with local Kayamandi residents is experienced by a broadly foreign, privileged, and non-South African audience.

Given that the rising interest in township tourism has contributed to the establishment of a handful of what could be considered gastronomic sites in Kayamandi, I questioned the notion of its ability to contribute to meaningful cross-cultural commensality, specifically between the communities of central Stellenbosch and the township. Culinary tourism, as engaged within the framework of township tourism, is complicated by problematic dynamics of consuming Otherness (see Long 2015d; Heldke 2013; Molz 2007; Duruz 2004; Fields 2002; Richards 2002), and in the case of Kayamandi requires critical consideration. The disconnect that is felt between the centre and the margin could, instead of being bridged, potentially further widen through a cross-cultural commensal practice which inherently touches on inequality, hunger and privilege through the intimate act of sharing food. Hence the value of framing such commensal practices through a sociomuseological approach, which centres its development on the aim of contributing to the well-being of those communities it involves, where well-being includes the encouragement of cross-cultural tolerance and understanding as expressions of social justice. The Edible Museum, as proposed in this study, would thus attempt to uncover if and how cross-cultural tolerance and understanding could be facilitated through a

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<sup>8</sup> Commensality highlights the socio-sensory aspects of sharing food, declaring its “almost magical properties in its ability to turn self-seeking individuals into a collaborative group” (Belasco 2008: 19). See 2.2.3 for a detailed definition.

sociomuseological exploration of foodways, which centres its practice on the creation of a commensal space of exchange.

### 1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT, RESEARCH QUESTION AND OBJECTIVES

#### 1.3.1 Describing the problem

Given the potential of exploring cross-cultural commensal exchange through a sociomuseological approach, I attempted to gain a preliminary understanding of the commensal landscape as experienced by Kayamandi residents. From initial conversations conducted with participants active in the food system of the community, a need for public spaces in which to socialise around and with food emerged. Commensality, it seemed, is most often consigned to the sphere of the home, hindering the opportunity to socialise beyond the family table, to communicate across different socio-cultural groups. From there, the possibility of an Edible Museum started to emerge.

Besides a handful of informal vendors, called *chisa nyamas*<sup>9</sup> selling mostly barbecued meats and other takeaways<sup>10</sup> by the taxi rank and scattered throughout the township, only one restaurant-type venue exists in Kayamandi, which is mainly focused towards tourists. *Shebeens*<sup>11</sup> offer communal spaces for gathering; however, they are sometimes associated with the societal afflictions of excessive alcohol consumption. The home thus becomes the primary site for sharing food – and on average is a space only large enough to seat a handful of people at a time. However, out of necessity a meal is shared among many more. Dining out at a restaurant is a luxury few can afford on a regular basis, and it then would additionally necessitate the taxi fare to Stellenbosch central or beyond, to a space which can accommodate a big family or a group of friends.

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<sup>9</sup> *Chisa nyama* (also spelled “*tshisa nyama*” or “*shisa nyama*”) means meat cooked on a fire in several African languages, including isiXhosa.

<sup>10</sup> Takeaway cooked food often includes, for example, meat stews accompanied by maize *pap* (porridge) and vegetables, or fish and chips, packaged in Styrofoam containers.

<sup>11</sup> Colloquial term for an informal tavern in the South African townships

The need for a restaurant-type space became evident, more so for its ability to gather both residents and potentially non-residents of Kayamandi in commensality than for the purposes of culinary tourism. The concept of a restaurant in the township, however “foreign,” could possibly serve as a starting point to broader interactions with the foodways of Kayamandi. In considering this concept, however, it would be necessary to critically reflect on the complex social, economic and cultural underpinnings of the restaurant space itself, as it could potentially reinforce the exclusionary distinctions that underpin the restaurant as a “microcosm” of symbolic practices (Beriss & Sutton 2007b: 4).

I recognised that a township restaurant has close affinities with and would share the same set of problematics as a township museum. As Witz (2006) cautions, the “fit” of a museum in the context of the township is problematic and requires an approach which is sensitive to the questions of legitimacy which it could provoke. Given that foodways could communicate through the shared bodily language of taste, however, I considered the pedagogical potential of the restaurant as a hybrid space informed by sociomuseological principles, to be a relevant potential starting point. The seed of the Edible Museum could be planted in the restaurant, yet its developmental growth would be measured in the community itself, through the cross-cultural interactions which it could prompt.

Given the potential of developing a commensal space that could combine the socio-sensory engagement of a restaurant with the pedagogical potential of a museum, the research question was formulated against this background.

### **1.3.2 Research question and objectives**

Based on the perceived need for commensal space as a sensory medium for cross-cultural dialogues, the research question for this study was formulated as follows:

What would an exploratory documentation of foodways resemble, through a sociomuseological practice, within the context of Kayamandi?

The sub-questions were:

- What are the foodways of the Kayamandi community, and how are these foodways experienced?
- What do these experiences reveal about the immediate and broader context?
- How could a sociomuseological practice be implemented or activated to acknowledge these foodways?

The main aim of this study was to explore foodways through a sociomuseological practice in Kayamandi, with the following objectives:

- To identify the foodways of the Kayamandi community and their experienced meaningfulness
- To investigate what these experiences reveal about the immediate and broader context
- To explore a sociomuseological practice which acknowledges these foodways

#### **1.4 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

For this research study, an interpretive approach was used with the objective of collecting qualitative data. Interpretive research is based on the assumption that our perception of reality, and in turn our perception of our data as researchers, is grounded on social constructions and thus requires a reflexive approach sensitive to the “complexity of human sense making” (Klein & Meyers 1999: 69). Along with the notion of interpretive research, the concept of sensory ethnography was central to the research methodology. According to Sarah Pink, sensory ethnography acknowledges “that sensoriality is fundamental to how we learn about, understand and represent other people’s lives” (2009: 7). Furthermore, Karen Barad’s notion of a diffractive methodology, from a posthumanist perspective, was followed as it requires the researcher to observe and interpret the data for its relational capacities, in attempting to destabilise accepted binaries (2014: 168).

An action research design was used, set within a post-positivist paradigm. Action research is a cyclical process whereby active involvement by the researcher in collaboration with participants is followed by reflection and evaluation, feeding back into action, and back again continuously with the aim of resolving

an identified problem or effecting social change (Zuber-Skerritt 2003; Greenwood & Levin 2007; Stringer 2014). This design was chosen for its affinity to sensory ethnography, which recognises the importance of “self-consciously and reflexively attending to the senses throughout the research process” (Pink 2009: 10), feeding into the immersive and participatory nature of the action research design. In terms of the study’s objective of imagining a sociomuseological practice, the action research design was best suited for its capacity to engage with participants towards an attempt at contributing to the well-being of the community.

Group and individual interviews as well as my own observations were the main source of data for the study, accompanied by visual and audio-recordings. After introductory engagement, fieldwork was conducted in Kayamandi. The research sample for this group was selected following a snowball sampling method, and included identified individuals who had experience and knowledge of foodways (specifically cooking or catering) in the community, or were stakeholders in the township restaurant with which the study formed a partnership. The township restaurant, although previously a tourist-focused initiative, had during my exploratory fieldwork expressed a desire to redesign its offering to become more inclusive of the Kayamandi community and its needs for social gathering space. Hence it presented a unique opportunity for an action research intervention, where community members could contribute to the re-imagination and strategic decision making of the restaurant space towards one that would encourage cross-cultural commensality in pedagogical terms with which the community could identify. Although a typical action research protocol would have possibly had the group choose or develop a project site together, the restaurant and its accompanying infrastructure presented a set of circumstances which allowed the project to overcome potential barriers to action, such as raising the financial capital to establish a new space, although not without the accompanying risks (see Chapter 5 for further discussion). Thus the Edible Museum started its journey within a defined socio-spatial structure, with a particular history, which would play a determining role in the development of the action research and the ultimate conceptualisation of a sociomuseological practice of foodways in Kayamandi.

Continuous inductive content analysis was used as part of the action research design and was conducted according to the iterative phases of the study, culminating in a final analysis of the data against the



literature. The data and analysis is presented following the chronological process of the action research in developing a sociomuseological practice, which necessitated a revision in the initially envisioned structure, towards one which includes an overview of a network of foodways sites in the Kayamandi community.

The Departmental Ethics Screening Committee (DESC) of the Visual Arts Department at Stellenbosch University granted ethical clearance for this study on 18 May 2015. Chapter 4 explains the research design and methodology in further detail.

## 1.5 BOUNDARIES AND LIMITATIONS

Foodways as a topic of investigation is complex and requires perspectives that include social, economic, political and cultural dynamics. The foodways identified in this dissertation were chosen for their commensal significance, while acknowledging the role of complex dynamics in shaping their meaning. For this reason, issues related to food security and nutrition, for example, are discussed only peripherally as they influence the various dimensions of foodways. The identification of foodways was approached from a socio-sensory perspective, in order to gain an understanding of how foodways are experienced through the senses between individuals, more so than providing an encyclopaedic account of the food objects themselves. For this reason, an in-depth focus on the material examples of foodways, such as products and recipes, is considered secondary to a holistic and sensory interpretation informed by an entanglement of the spatial, social and material relevancies.

Also, given the participatory nature of action research, the study was conducted within the flexible boundaries that a participatory approach invites. Openness to unexpected changes and outcomes was critical to allow the study to follow its own trajectory, regardless of my intentions as researcher. The complexity of the interaction between me as a white researcher working with a group of mostly black participants<sup>12</sup> also posed tensions that required critical reflection. Feelings of “white guilt” were often prevalent during our interactions, which were also at times informed by sensory disruptions when

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<sup>12</sup> See Chapter 4 and Appendix A for the coding analysis of participants – note that the participants, although mostly black, included white members.

confronted with situations and foodways with which I was unfamiliar. Differences in approach to problem-solving and strategy development often occurred not only between the group interview participants and me but among themselves (at times caused by cultural differences), which occasionally necessitated mediation roles which were difficult to practise objectively. These complexities however, acknowledged as part of the action research process, informed the dynamics of working towards a sociomuseological practice.

## **1.6 STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION**

**ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY** | The first chapter provides a broad introduction to the research, followed by its context and background as forming a part of a larger study. The problem statement, research question and objectives are identified, followed by a brief description of the methodology and research design. The chapter concludes with delineating the research boundaries and limitations and an outline of the structure of the dissertation.

**THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES** | Chapter 2 presents the theoretical framework of the study through a literature review. Sensory studies as a paradigm functions as the foundation of this framework, expanded by the notions of intersensoriality and synaesthesia, as well as cultural omnivorousness, somaesthetics, and commensality as strategic and socio-political actions of taste. Posthumanism is subsequently discussed in relation to sensory studies, specifically focusing on the concepts of difference, affect, entanglement and diffraction, also referring from an ethics perspective to social justice. In turn, sociomuseology is explored as a movement which recognises the implication of museums in the broader dialogue of social justice and community well-being, and in order to inform the conceptualisation of a workable practice as explained in the research objectives.

**CONTEXTUALISING THE STUDY** | Chapter 3 provides the context in which this study is based, commencing with a brief global perspective on foodways as documented and communicated in museology. This is followed by a South African view on the state of foodways and museology, the context of foodways and museology in Stellenbosch, and finally in Kayamandi itself. As museology and foodways are rarely

considered together in the local context, I discuss each context individually before presenting their interrelation in each setting.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY** | Chapter 4 presents the research methodology and design used in this study. An interpretive approach was used, and the methodology was informed by sensory ethnography and a diffractive methodology. An action research design was followed, with iterative inductive data analysis transpiring during the action research process. Group and individual interviews, as well as observations and visual recordings, were used as the main data collection method. Interviews were conducted with selected participants knowledgeable about foodways in the Kayamandi community.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF THE EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATIONS** | In Chapter 5, the data of this study is presented and discussed. The data collected is first presented from the attempt at a sociomuseological practice with a township restaurant as its platform, followed by the data collected from a revised interpretation of the concept, which includes a broader collection of foodways data, and incorporates a re-examined understanding of the township restaurant as a functional part of the revised network concept. This is followed by a discussion of the findings along three central themes, which emerged from the action research process. These themes developed from my awareness of the problematics of translating and negotiating foodways' networks between Kayamandi and Stellenbosch, the cultural dichotomies of taste as perceived by participants, and the sensory experience of dining across Otherness.

**CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS** | The final chapter completes the dissertation and presents my conclusions and some implications for further research. The proposed sociomuseological practice as suggested by the research question is summarised through its conceptualisation as an Edible Museum, and the potential which this concept poses for further implementation in the museum field is discussed.



Figure 1.3 – Table setting for a gathering at a house in Kayamandi

## CHAPTER 2 — THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Embarking on an immersive study of foodways necessitates a sense of adventure – wide eyes, open ears, dirty palms, an un-pinched nose and a willing tongue. In the words of Paul Stoller (1997), it requires a humble submission to the senses:

To accept sensuousness in scholarship is to eject the conceit of control in which mind and body, self and other are considered separate ... To accept sensuousness is ... to lend one's body to the world and accept its complexities, tastes, structures, and smells (1997: xvii).

The notion of accepting the sensuous and its complexity of implications is one which resonates with the purpose of this study and its methodology, but which also gives guidance to the construction of its theoretical framework. Not only is foodways a far-reaching and transdisciplinary subject in and of itself; in this context it requires a scholarly approach which steps beyond theory into sensory practice.

Foodways as a theoretical construct has grown in scholarship across a diversity of disciplines, especially in the last few decades. Anthropologists, sociologists, historians, folklorists, and philosophers, among others, have all contributed to this dialogue. In museology, the subject of foodways has only recently been engaged with in greater depth, revealing opportunity for further research (Levent & Mihalache 2017a; Gothie 2015; Mihalache 2016, 2014). One of the reasons for this lag in inquiry is the historical disengagement between the museum as a site of knowledge production and the non-visual senses (see Edwards et al. 2006a; Bennett 2006, 1995; Vergo 1989; Wright 1989) – those senses that are critical to the interpretation of foodways. This disengagement also extends to the historical paradigm in which the museum was conceptualised, as a modernist and humanist institution (Bennett 1995, Hooper-Greenhill 2000). The theoretical framework for this study is consequently premised on a re-engagement with the non-visual senses and a reframing of the museum as a posthuman institution, thereby calling upon a sociomuseological approach.

In order to achieve such re-engagement, sensory theory is explored as the basis of my theoretical framework. The development of sensory theory has enabled scholars to challenge the “hegemony of vision in Western culture” and propose new ways of “knowing” or rather “sensing” the world (Howes 2003: xii). Within sensory theory I focus on intersensoriality and synaesthesia, the holistic perception considering all senses as part of an integrated experience of meaning (Howes 2003, Sullivan 1986). I then discuss the role of taste within this experience as a means of understanding foodways, referring also to cultural omnivorousness, somaesthetics, and commensality as strategic and socio-political actions of taste. Lastly, I examine the sense of taste in the context of cultural Otherness or difference, drawing upon a critical scholarship which questions the power relations embedded in such consumption.

Building on sensory theory, posthumanism is discussed as providing an alternative perspective to the epistemology of the humanist museum in its affinity with sensory theory. As posthumanism is a vast and complex paradigm, I focus my attention on the posthumanist approach to knowledge creation as it resonates with sensory theory in arguing for modes of interpretation that go beyond humanistic binary dualisms, much akin to intersensoriality or synaesthesia. The departure from a humanistic suppression of difference towards a posthuman embrace of dissensus is discussed and contextualised with regard to its ability to facilitate cross-cultural tolerance and understanding. Affect theory provides an additional viewpoint which brings an emotive aspect of synaesthetic interpretation of difference to the fore, informing the posthumanist approach. I focus on intra-action, entanglement and diffraction as specific new materialist concepts within posthumanism, which collapse the boundary between the social and the material. These concepts argue for a way of making meaning through the affirmative entanglement of the social and the material (Barad 2007), simultaneously engaging an ethical stance that aligns with social justice. Social justice theory is discussed briefly with reference to Fraser (2007, 1996), and supported by the critical theories of bell hooks (2003, 1990) and a critical engagement with the philosophy of Ubuntu (Mkhize 2008, Praeg 2014), to frame the enabling of cross-cultural tolerance and understanding through sensory experiences.

Finally, sociomuseology lends pragmatic support to the theoretical framework. I first contextualise sociomuseology as having developed from a growing need in the museum field for institutional accountability to societies and communities with the goal of contributing positively toward social justice. I

then draw some parallels between sensory theory and posthumanism discussed above and sociomuseological practice, towards making meaning of foodways.

In concluding this chapter, I provide a conceptual framework based on the literature discussed which synthesises the various theoretical approaches. My choices of theories will be explained and contextualised with regard to my research.

## **2.2. MAKING “SENSE” OF FOODWAYS**

### **2.2.1 BEYOND THE FIVE SENSES – INTERSENSORIALITY AND SYNAESTHESIA**

In order to arrive at an understanding of the senses as inter-dependent according to their synaesthetic or intersensory definition, it is necessary to trace the origins of sensory theory as scholars have considered the importance of the senses to society and its practices of culture. David Howes, along with Constance Classen, have contributed widely to the current understanding of the development of sensory theory along social and cultural lines. Howes describes current sensory theory as understanding the sensory experience not only through its implication of the subjective body in a physical way, but through it affecting and being affected by social relations, and therefore contributing to “a field of cultural elaboration” (2003: xi). Howes and Classen also emphasise the pervasiveness with which such “sensory impressions” occur, as we are constantly engaging in culturally significant gestures through our everyday interactions using our bodily senses (2014: 14). Given this very ordinary, everyday nature of the senses, it is difficult to imagine that scholars at the turn of the modern, scientific era would engage with a topic so seemingly mundane. Yet, according to Howes (2003), academic engagement with the sensory and its influence on society dates back to the writings of Karl Marx and Lucien Freud, and were notably further developed by the likes of Claude Lévi-Strauss, Roland Barthes and Marshall McLuhan, among others.



By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and following the Industrial Revolution, Marx was beginning to consider the senses from a socio-economic perspective, inspired by the philosophers Feuerbach<sup>13</sup> and Fourier<sup>14</sup> (Howes 2003: 204). He found the capitalist drive towards wealth accumulation in society to have caused people to ignore the pleasures and relative value of sensory stimulation in contributing to personhood (Howes 2003: 206). Thus already during the turn of the century, the senses were beginning to weigh on the consciousness of writers perhaps already wary of the potential threat that new technologies posed to our embodied “humanity”. Freud is considered to be one of the theorists who first mentioned the sensorium<sup>15</sup> in the context of subjective sexual development, but he argued that the “lower senses” (associated with the sense of smell and taste) increasingly became less important as a person aged and advanced in mental capacity (Howes 2003: xv). This is counter to what Howes (2003) considers modern sensory theory to posit in favour of a more egalitarian and inter-dependent sensory emphasis.

Decades later, Lévi-Strauss conceptualised the “Culinary Triangle”, which attempted to define society’s sensory understanding of food according to the structuralist paradigm (2013 (1966)). Opposing the raw, cooked and rotted, along the axes of culture and nature, Lévi-Strauss constructed a textual pyramid consisting of binaries which, although relevant at his time, neglected to uncover the complexity of sensory interactions, framing them rather in fixed, oppositional terms (Howes 2003: xx). Alternatively, his contemporary Roland Barthes discussed the symbolic qualities of food in arguing as follows:

When he buys an item of food, consumes it, or serves it, modern man does not manipulate a simple object in a purely transitive fashion; this item of food sums up and transmits a situation; it constitutes an information; it signifies (Barthes 2013 (1961): 24).

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<sup>13</sup> Howes presents Feuerbach’s sensory thesis as the understanding that a person experiences self-hood through the senses, and that the self is thus constructed through the senses as much as the external environment in which they find themselves is also perceived through the senses (2003: 205).

<sup>14</sup> According to Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson, “Fourier based his philosophical system on the social utility of pleasure”, and advocated for the pleasurable stimulation and development of the senses, for example through food, as a means toward establishing social harmony through “material abundance” (1998: 626-627).

<sup>15</sup> The sensorium is defined as the holistic or encompassing term for the bodily sense organs as a unit.

Thus, Barthes's "modern man" was saying something through food, using his sensorium to do so. The senses, according to Barthes, were implicated in a complex system of semiotic communication, perhaps more complex than Lévi-Strauss had theorised.

Marshall McLuhan (1964, 1962), a pioneer of media theory, is recognised in sensory theory for his revolutionary conceptualisation of the sensorium and suggestion of the complex interaction between the senses, also with the increasing influence from a rapidly changing technological and globalised environment. He specifically argued that the senses operate according to flexible ratios, and that advances in technological media, which act as bodily "extensions", could influence each sense (1962: 41). Theoretically, this means that certain sensory functions could be amplified to such an extent to cause the alteration of sense ratios, necessarily influencing how culture is perceived and produced. McLuhan has subsequently been criticised for his "technological determinism" in classifying societies and their cultural development according to adoption of sensory-enhancing technologies<sup>16</sup> (Howes 2003: xix). Nonetheless, McLuhan can be credited with establishing the delineation and interaction of the senses in contributing to cultural knowledge as it varies across geographies (Howes 2003: xx). Moreover, his concept of tactility is a forerunner to what many theorists in sensory theory have considered as intersensoriality or synaesthesia, where McLuhan argues that "tactility is less a separate sense than it is the interplay among the senses" (2005 (1961): 46) and simultaneously requires us to adopt an "active participant role" (1962: 41). It is this sensorial interplay that has received much theoretical attention among sensory scholars of late.

According to contemporary sensory theory, "intersensory relationships" are a determining factor in our social relationships (Howes 2003: xx). The senses form "an interactive web of experience" that are mutually supportive yet dynamically challenging or even contradictory at times (Howes & Classen 2014: 15). "Intersensoriality", then, can be defined as the complex network of relations that govern the sensorium and our "ways of sensing" or sensory perception (Howes & Classen 2014: 16). Furthermore, this sensory network

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<sup>16</sup> Such criticism towards McLuhan's theories is directed at statements such as: "The African lives typically in the hyperesthetic mode of the ear in which everything is related to everything else, as in a field of simultaneous relations. The European and North American, in contrast, tend to live in the cool visual mode in which people and things have a good deal of separate existence" (McLuhan 2005 (1961): 44).

of relations has an impact on environmental perceptions as well as social relationships (Howes 2003: 55). Given this understanding of the sensory network, the cultural model of synaesthesia as developed by Sullivan (1986) also proves relevant.

Sullivan considers cultural groups to come to mutual understanding and reinforcement of cultural rituals through unifying messages that are received across sensory channels, creating “unity of meaning” (Howes 2003: 52). For Sullivan, the senses process cultural knowledge for each individual separately, but through performance these individual processes of sensory knowledge acquisition inform the broader cultural experience (1986: 6). That is to say, Sullivan argues that it is a semiotic reading of bodily actions through the senses *in unison*, and on occasions of performance of rituals, that determines shared cultural knowledge. For Sullivan, ritual acts provide the necessary space for self-reflection in this determination of cultural knowledge through the senses. Food thus becomes an ideal point of investigation in synaesthesia, considering its vital role in both ceremonial and everyday ritual acts.

Sutton, in his work on memory and the senses, elaborates on the specific role of food in his understanding of synaesthesia:

[T]he union of the senses is not only a metaphor for social wholeness ... it is an embodied aspect of creating the experience of the whole. Food is not a random part that recalls the whole to memory. Its synesthetic qualities, when culturally elaborated ... are an essential ingredient in ritual and everyday experiences of totality. Food does not simply symbolize social bonds and divisions; it participates in their creation and re-creation (Sutton 2001: 102).

Food and foodways in this way go beyond the symbolic and through their active, synaesthetic interaction with our sensory bodies assist in our common understanding or misunderstanding of each other as cultural beings. French philosopher Michel Serres posits a thought-provoking addition to the dialogue on sensory theory through the notion of a “common sense” between cultures. He considers the skin as a “multisensorial” common sense (2008 (1985): 81):

The skin is a variety of contingency: in it, through it, with it, the world and my body touch each other, the feeling and the felt, it defines their common edge. Contingency means common

tangency: in it the world and body intersect and caress each other ... Skin intervenes between several things in the world and makes them mingle (Serres 2008 (1985): 80).

For Serres, the skin encompasses all of our bodily sense organs in one term (such as synaesthesia), and acts as the membrane which keeps senses together, yet allows for their interaction not only between their parts but with others' skins (and senses) as well as the external environment. As much as our skins make us mingle, however, they can also act as sensory barriers as they function as symbols of social difference. In spite of skin functioning as our common edge, our perceived differences can cause us to lose sight of this commonality, resulting in racial divisions as historically evidenced and formalised by the systems of colonialism and apartheid. Although never explicitly referring to its potential evils, Serres's skin remains a powerful concept through which to examine the notion of synaesthesia and intersensoriality as supporting socio-cultural cohesion and division. After broadly outlining the development of sensory theory and the concepts of intersensoriality and synaesthesia, I now examine the role of taste within this sensory network towards an interpretation of foodways.

### **2.2.2 TASTE AND GASTRONOMY IN THE INTERSENSORY EXPERIENCE**

Considering the sense of taste within an intersensory network as it gives meaning to foodways, a relevant starting point would be the very act of tasting and eating food from a subjective perspective. Putting food in one's mouth, chewing it, ingesting and digesting it, is an intensely personal and intimate act (Ferguson in Forest and Murphy 2014: 354). Not only is it highly subjective, its value or pleasure is derived from its ephemerality, in the "moment" of tasting (Curtin 1992b: 126). Given this intimate, fleeting moment to which subjective, physiological taste is consigned, its communicability would seem challenging. The field and study of gastronomy, however, emerged exactly because of society's fascination with the pleasure of tasting and eating. Deane Curtin argues that "[t]aking the category [of] 'food' seriously leads to a suspicion that the absolute border between self and other which seems so obvious in the western tradition is nothing more than an arbitrary philosophical construction" (1992a: 9).<sup>17</sup> With the advent of gastronomic studies,

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<sup>17</sup> "Since food is ingested and becomes part of the self, it obliges us to reconceptualise not only the other but also the identity of a self that is so permeable, that it can physically incorporate the other" (Martin 2005: 28). See 2.2.4 for a discussion on taste and Otherness.

food became a figurative lens through which scholars could in a new language address issues of subjectivity, Otherness and difference, relying on sensory and bodily theories of engagement to do so. Where Curtin's philosophy of gastronomy is a contemporary and reflective one, his predecessors in gastronomic studies from the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century considered food from a decidedly modernist perspective, with a firm focus on the pleasurability of food.

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, Brillat-Savarin wrote *The Physiology of Taste*, which became one of the quintessential gastronomic texts on taste and the enjoyment of food. His philosophy on eating still rings true for the increasing number of people who identify themselves as "foodies" in contemporary society:

[W]hen we eat, we experience an indefinable and peculiar sensation of well-being, arising out of an instinctive awareness that through what we are eating we are repairing our losses and prolonging our existence (Brillat-Savarin 1994 (1825): 45).

According to Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson, the discourse of gastronomy developed in 19<sup>th</sup> century France in response to the post-Revolutionary transformative social, economic and cultural circumstances that were changing the way people perceived the production and consumption of food (1998: 603). The emergence of new categories of identity surrounding people, places and traditions – such as chefs, diners, and restaurants<sup>18</sup> – signalled a cultural turn in the culinary sphere. The transformation of "physiological need into an intellectual phenomenon" prompts an awareness of new systems of thinking which facilitated the formalisation of food and foodways, and the experience of taste (Ferguson 1998: 600). For Ferguson, the development of gastronomy as a field of interest was vested in the intellectual products derived from culinary-inspired literary works, journalism, treatises and recipes, among other texts<sup>19</sup> (1998). She argues that "[g]astronomy constructed its modernity through an expansive culinary discourse and, more specifically, through texts. Gastronomic texts were key agents in the socialization of individual desire and the redefinition of appetite in collective terms" (1998: 600). Food thus transformed from an ephemeral,

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<sup>18</sup> Notably all are indicative of the enjoyment of food, of its pleasures.

<sup>19</sup> "For language allows sharing what is at once the most assertively individual and yet, arguably, the most dramatically social of our acts – eating. If words turned food into culinary texts, these texts inserted gastronomy into a field. They set the culinary agenda and instituted the cultural debates that defined the gastronomic field as well as the logic that determined relations within this field" (Ferguson 1998: 611).

physiological satisfaction to an inextricable part of socio-cultural embodiment and the satisfaction of non-physiological desires or tastes (Ferguson 1998: 600). This understanding of gastronomy as forming communal and social taste is echoed by Johnston and Baumann, who also argue for the gastronomic field to be understood critically as “a fluid discursive field where the legitimacy of food production and consumption methods are negotiated” (2007: 171).

Pierre Bourdieu was one of the first theorists to broach the subject of food and taste as implicated in a greater social system of class distinction, in his seminal work *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste* (1984). His arguments rest on the dualism created between the sensory and the aesthetic, the necessary and the luxurious (liberatory), pleasure and “pure” pleasure (Bourdieu & Nice 1984: 6). Bourdieu proposes an opposition between tastes of freedom (or luxury) and tastes of necessity – those possessing the required capital are free to taste what they please, and those without are forced to adopt a taste of necessity (1984: 177).<sup>20</sup> Thus taste becomes a polarising element in society, whether related to taste in fashion, design, art, or the taste in food. Bourdieu rather matter-of-factly states that “[t]astes (i.e., manifested preferences) are the practical affirmation of an inevitable difference” (Bourdieu & Nice 1984: 56).

Several authors have argued that however pertinent Bourdieu’s schematics were at the time, his binary relationship between taste and difference is too linear a paradigm by which to examine our current subject in the context of contemporary gastronomic studies (Peterson & Kern 1996; Bryson 1996; Warde, Martens & Olsen 1999; Johnston & Baumann 2007). Rather, a more complex interpretation of his theory is necessary. The notion of cultural “omnivorousness”, as developed among sociologists including Richard Peterson, has facilitated in establishing a theoretical dialogue on the rather complex relationship between taste and social difference as manifested in class, race and gender, which extends the argument beyond taste preferences

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<sup>20</sup> “The antithesis between quantity and quality, substance and form, corresponds to the opposition – linked to different distances from necessity – between the taste of necessity, which favours the most ‘filling’ and economical foods, and the taste of liberty – or luxury – which shifts the emphasis to the manner (of presenting, serving, eating, etc.) and tends to use stylized forms to deny function” (Bourdieu & Nice 1984: 6).

towards questions of social exclusion and authenticity. Peterson and Kern developed the term “cultural omnivorousness”, coined by Peterson and Simkus, on the basis of ascertaining a social shift from “snobbishness” (premised on discriminatory exclusion in association with status) towards “omnivorousness”, associated with the educated understanding of and openness to a diversity of cultural expressions (Peterson & Kern 1996: 904). They argue that “omnivorous inclusion seems better adapted to an increasingly global world managed by those who make their way, in part, by showing respect for the cultural expressions of others”, than the discriminatory snobbishness observed by Bourdieu to take place between classes (1996: 906). Omnivorousness, however, operates according to alternative exclusionary and discriminatory mechanisms.

Bryson, in studying differences and dislikes in musical tastes, in turn argues that cultural omnivorousness should be considered an alternative symbolic manifestation of cultural exclusion, where dislike and intolerance are not conflated, yet form a more complex socio-cultural dynamic (1996). Bryson uses the term “multicultural capital” to describe the symbolic power associated with tolerance of diverse cultural expressions (1996: 888), although this capital does not necessarily equate to culturally inclusive preferences. Rather, multicultural capital alternatively reorders exclusion, based on class, also correlating with race (Bryson 1996: 895). Tolerance becomes a cultural currency which is reserved for those with higher levels of education.

Warde et al. expand on Bryson’s argument in a study of omnivorousness in the context of British restaurant frequentation, contributing a specifically commensal focus to the understanding that “cultural consumption continues to reflect social inequalities and, if it symbolises refinement, is a potential mechanism for social exclusion” (1999: 124). In a study of gourmet food writing, Johnston and Baumann further the argument for the concept of cultural omnivorousness as enacting social exclusion through a discussion of the framing roles of authenticity and exoticism (2007). They posit that “frames of authenticity and exoticism contain elements of democratic inclusivity, but also legitimize and reproduce status distinctions” in the context of culinary cultural consumption (Johnston & Baumann 2007: 169). For Johnston and Baumann, the ideology of democratic liberalism operates in tension with the ideology of status and distinction, and it is through the negotiation of this tension that social and cultural inclusion and exclusion are enacted through food (2007:



173). More specifically, they argue, authenticity and exoticism are the frames through which food is considered to enact social boundaries, where authenticity relates to its geographic, “simplistic”, narrative and historical legitimacy,<sup>21</sup> and exoticism to its legitimacy in relation to being “unusual,” “foreign”, or “exciting”<sup>22</sup> (Johnston & Baumann 2007). It is often through an “aesthetic disposition” that these frames are considered to navigate exoticism and authenticity in food towards achieving distinction or higher status (2007: 198).<sup>23</sup>

The discourse of cultural omnivorousness thus points to a contemporary scholarly understanding of taste, which speaks to a complex engagement with the social, political, and cultural intricacies that shape social interactions across perceived differences. This understanding, however, rarely includes a consideration of the role of the physiological senses in participating in the holistic or rather synaesthetic enactment of social boundaries through taste. Richard Shusterman’s theory of somaesthetics (2016, 1999), however, is one attempt to bridge the gap between the social and the sensory in facilitating a discussion of discriminatory practices of taste and eating.

### 2.2.3 SOMAESTHETICS AND EATING WITH OTHERS

Shusterman’s theories build on those of Bourdieu in supporting “the idea of the body as a social construct that reflects the culturally differentiated conditions in which particular individuals live” (Koczanowicz 2016: 110). However, Shusterman, unlike Bourdieu, believes in the ability of bodies to transcend the social systems to which they are prescribed (ibid.). He (provisionally) defines somaesthetics as “the critical, meliorative study of the experience and use of one’s body as a locus of sensory-aesthetic appreciation

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<sup>21</sup> “Authentic foods are seemingly ‘simple’ foods that come from highly specific places off the middle-class tourist path, they are produced by hard-working rural people with noncommercial motivations, they have ties to specific personalities and culinary artists (especially in wealthy settings), they have a rich history, and they are consumed in casual, ‘simple’ settings” (Johnston & Baumann 2007: 187).

<sup>22</sup> “[T]he framing of exoticism presents a dialectical tension between democratic ideology and an ideology of distinction. The broadening of the repertoire of worthy foods is concomitant with the demarcation of other food preferences as banal, undistinguished, or unsophisticated” (Johnston & Baumann 2007:195).

<sup>23</sup> The role of an aesthetic disposition in the context of framing exoticism and authenticity is discussed in Chapter 5 as a key determinant to the results of this study.

(*aisthesis*) and creative self-fashioning. It is therefore also devoted to the knowledge, discourses, practices, and bodily disciplines that structure such somatic care or can improve it" (Shusterman 1999: 302, original emphasis). Somaesthetics therefore returns to Baumgarten's original notion of aesthetics as "the science of sensory cognition and ... its perfection" but pragmatically frames this philosophy as a bodily project<sup>24</sup> (Shusterman 1999: 301):

Knowledge on how the body functions and consciousness of one's own bodiliness must be intertwined with somatic practice because only through combining theory and practice can the perceptive capacities be enhanced. This is prerequisite to a better and fuller functioning both in the natural environment and in the social one (Koczanowicz 2016: 109).

The notion of bodiliness in somaesthetics is similarly described by Lisa Heldke as constituting "bodily knowledge", which she frames from the perspective of considering food making as both theoretical and practical. She argues that "[t]o know food – to know how to cook food well – does not require an abstracted, measurement-conscious knowledge ... but rather a knowledge in the eyes and in the hands ... Bodily knowledge is acquired through embodied experience" (1992: 219). "Bodily knowledge", or somaesthetics, is thus learned through the senses.

Somaesthetics reflects the philosophy of synaesthesia in its emphasis on intersensory interactions between bodies, others and the environment, but also provides a pragmatic approach to its implementation towards transforming social systems. Given the aesthetic nature of gastronomy, Shusterman reflects on the sensory capacity of taste in describing what he terms the somaesthetic "art of eating" (2016). It is through the "art of eating" as a mindful, temporal and kinaesthetic activity (requiring time and performative movement), that taste is developed and perfected, not only for the betterment of one's body, but of one's cultural kinship:

Human eating is intrinsically a social practice, steeped in cultural meanings, even when one dines alone. But most of our eating, and surely the most important, is done in the company

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<sup>24</sup> "Concerned not simply with the body's external form or representation but also with its lived experience, somaesthetics works at improving awareness of our bodily states and feelings, thus providing greater insight into both our passing moods and lasting attitudes" (Shusterman 1999: 302-303). Somaesthetics in its experiential sense reminds of Affect Theory, as discussed in 2.3.1.

of others, where artful eating not only adds pleasure to one's own dining but enhances the enjoyment of one's dining companions to create distinctively social and communicative aesthetic pleasures of sharing an informed and reflective appreciation of the dining experience, an enjoyment that goes beyond the taste of food (Shusterman 2016: 266).

Somaesthetics thus provides a valuable transformative approach to gastronomy and taste that not only sympathises with the philosophy of synaesthesia but also provides a potential proposal for pragmatically considering food as a means to facilitate cross-cultural tolerance and understanding through a reflective "art of eating".

Shusterman's "art of eating" also calls to mind Glenn Kuehn's notion of "tasting the world" (Kuehn 2012). Writing on the subject of environmental aesthetics and its relation to food, Kuehn argues that "food is an education in culture – it is an education in what the interrelated environmental aspects that hold together a group or a society or an history or an heritage tastes like" (Kuehn 2012: 94). For Kuehn, eating is primarily an act of consumption and less a participatory action, as Shusterman would describe:

In order to eat we have to involve ourselves in a gustatory relationship with the world. We may put the food 'into' our mouths, but eating is an interaction, we 'go out' to meet the food. Food transforms us, it is filtered by us, and not all of it stays with us. Through eating, the world passes through us and thus completes the truly interactive and transactional relationship that is our experience (Kuehn 2012: 95).

Although Kuehn, like Shusterman, emphasises the role of the body to act as the medium for the subjective and experiential relationship with food (hence his use of the term "interaction"), he neglects engagement with the social aspects of this relationship. For Kuehn, "the world" is broadly defined as the complex environment in which the self is contextualised, but he does not specify how others within this environment are experienced in relation to the subjective experience of eating. Kuehn's approach seems to propose a one-directional relationship of food with the self (the self is educated and potentially transformed through food) but the self does not in turn necessarily feed back into food (or its contextualisation), as it were. Shusterman's somaesthetics, alternatively, provides a more complex understanding of the subjective and communal relationship with food as described earlier, in arguing for an approach which relies on a

transformative experience of food *with the aim of both self- and social improvement* by also taking into consideration others in this context. His emphasis on the social aspect of the practice (or art) of eating subsequently necessitates discussion of the notion of commensality, which is central to informing an understanding of foodways from a socio-spatial perspective.

Commensality is the practice of eating together in a defined space, most traditionally around a table (*mensa* meaning table) (Fischler 2011: 529). Georg Simmel was one of the earliest theorists to consider commensality beyond the ceremonial event, in the context of the everyday. He noted that the practice of commensality is so unique because it turns

‘the exclusive selfishness of eating’ into ‘a habit of being gathered together such as is seldom attainable on occasions of a higher and intellectual order. Persons who in no way share any special interest can gather together at the common meal ... There lies the immeasurable sociological significance of the meal (Simmel cited in Fischler 2011: 531)

Where Simmel’s description proposes that strangers can gather together (as in a restaurant setting) for a meal and in that way share an experience, dining at the same table is more frequently reserved for those with whom we are more familiar. Given the capacity of commensality to gather, by the same token it can also exclude, as it “creates and/or sanctions inclusion (even transient inclusion) in a group or community, as well as exclusion of those not taking part” (Fischler 2011: 533). Sobal and Nelson describe this inclusion/exclusion dynamic of commensality to establish commensal units (i.e. “the family”), as well as “commensal circles, which are networks of relationships that delineate the range of people whom individuals could, have, and do eat with” (2003: 181). Commensal units and circles are strategically determined by taste, as Fischler argues that “[i]n apparently all cultures, eating the same food is equated with producing the same flesh and blood, thus making commensals more alike and bringing them closer to each other” (Fischler 2011: 533). Commensality could in this way be considered a strategic practice of eating, using the sense of taste to include and exclude individuals or communities within shared space that is defined by a communal culture.

Seremetakis, writing from a perspective of the role of the senses in memory formation, slightly differently defines commensality as “*the exchange of sensory memories and emotions, and of substances and objects incarnating remembrance and feeling*” (1993: 14, original emphasis). Seremetakis’s definition allows commensality to extend beyond the table, providing a particularly useful understanding of food and eating as functioning beyond its immediate material environment and as a practice of both past and future. It also opens up commensality to the complexity of synaesthesia, as sensory memories by definition imply calling upon intersensory experiences – one would be very unlikely to recall only the smell of a particular food and not its taste or visual appearance, or the feelings it evoked at the time of eating. Forrest and Murphy’s description of food also evokes an intersensory approach to commensality:

[F]ood is the nexus of the ‘sensing’ self and the ‘sensible’ society, the meeting point of the individual and the communal. Through the experience of tasting, smelling, touching, seeing, and even hearing food, the individual encounters culture, and becomes a part of society (2014: 353).

Forrest and Murphy propose that, through the action of taste as occurring within an intersensory experience, an individual senses something of the communal. This experience is inevitably heightened if occurring in a communal environment where it is shared with others, as is understood by commensality.

In the context of commensality, it could be argued that the sensory object which is shared is not simply *food* but a meal. According to Mary Douglas, “[t]he meal puts its frame on the gathering” (1975: 255). In other words, the way that food is chosen, cooked, presented and consumed, as a meal, is relevant to our sensory interactions with the food and those with whom we share it. It is also relevant to consider the social relations around the meal and its enjoyment – who is cooking it, who is eating it. Luce Giard coined the term “doing-cooking” to attempt to unravel the assumption that cooking is a simple, routine (and feminine) activity of making food palatable. Rather, “[d]oing-cooking thus rests atop a complex montage of circumstances and objective data, where necessities and liberties overlap, a confused and constantly changing mixture through which tactics are invented, trajectories are carved out, and ways of operating are individualized” (Giard in De Certeau, Giard, Mayol & Tomasik 1998: 201). The choices made by the cook are therefore implicated in a complex network of intersensory and social relations, which will ultimately lead

to a meal that draws its participants into this complex network. This entanglement (to borrow from Barad, see 2.3) between sensory, social and spatial considerations in the context of taste informs a complex understanding of foodways and its meanings. Giard continues her explanation of “doing-cooking” by writing:

[T]he everyday work in kitchens remains a way of unifying matter and memory, life and tenderness, the present moment and the abolished past, invention and necessity, imagination and tradition – tastes, smells, colors, flavors, shapes, consistencies, actions, gestures, movements, people and things, heat, savorings, spices, and condiments (Giard in De Certeau et al. 1998: 222).

Giard implies with the string of sensory words that “doing-cooking” collapses dichotomies of experience through its complex web of tastes, smells, gestures, sights and sounds. This collapse similarly applies to other taste-related actions along the continuum of commensality besides cooking, whether occurring around a table or in passing anonymously in the street. Serres’s philosophy of the “skin” again proves insightful here, as we could consider it a permeable membrane which somehow holds together this very complex interaction of sensory experiences within our bodies yet simultaneously allows us to share these experiences with others, resulting in communal meaning making. As mentioned earlier, however, the skin can also act as a barrier to the development of a common sense, when the Other is perceived as threateningly different to ourselves. In the following section I examine this notion of cultural difference as perceived through taste.

## 2.2.4 SENSING OTHERNESS AND THE FLAVOUR OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCE

It has been established in sensory theory that we reach communal understandings of cultural meanings through sharing our own, subjective intersensory or synaesthetic experiences of the world with others.<sup>25</sup> It can therefore be argued that “[d]ifferent cultures, then, create their own material orders and in the process make slightly different senses” of things (Edwards et al. 2006b: 5). That is to say, diverse cultural groups attach different values to sensory experiences according to the material culture of that group. Edwards et

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<sup>25</sup> “The forms that things are felt to take, the general sense of what it is possible to do with things, and the ways of being-in-the-world, derive from sensory interaction with the world” (Edwards et al. 2006b: 5).



al. bring attention to the “marginalizing [of] the sensory intelligence of numerous groups struggling within world systems of discourse and knowledge, a process that has been integral to colonialism and the concomitant practices of museums and other institutions” (2006b: 7). There are many examples of public institutions, besides museums, where Othering occurs through sensory discrimination. In today’s multicultural and globalised society, “sensory colonialism” as such is most notably realised in the spaces where Western-dominant perceptions of “ethnic food” manifest.

Krishnendu Ray has written extensively on the subject of ethnic foodways and summarises the definition of ethnic food, in the American context but broadly applicable in the Western world, as suggesting “poor, exotic, and different” (2014: 393). Ray argues that the label of ethnicity implies a way of Othering, where “[a]n ethnic is a proximate but a subordinate other, too close to be foreign, too different to be the self” (Ray 2016: 25). Ethnic food, then, is the food of the Other, which signifies an “unequal relationship between the self-proclaimed normative center of the Euro-American imagination, its dominating institutions, and numerous categories of others such as the foreigner, the tourist, the exile, the stranger, the immigrant, etc.” (Ray 2016: 29-30). In the context of this research, ethnic food considered from a Euro-American perspective could be directly compared to the perception of what is “African” food (see 5.2.3.2 for a discussion).

Lisa Heldke proposes the term “cultural food colonialism” as means to describe the Western fascination with the ethnic foods of the Other, after an introspective look at her own behaviours in the kitchen (2013 (2001): 395). She subsequently compares her “food adventurer” actions to those of colonial explorers, “who set out in search of ever ‘newer’, ever more ‘remote’ cultures they could co-opt, borrow from freely and out of context, and use as the raw materials for their own efforts at creation and discovery” (Heldke 2013 (2001): 395). Having recognised her own Western tendency to want to appropriate the exotic culinary senses of the Other, Heldke poses the questions: “How can one enact anticolonialist resistance in the kitchen, the grocery store, the cookbook? How can I transform my ethnic cooking into what bell hooks calls a critical intervention in the machinery of colonialism?” (2013 (2001): 405). Her answers suggest not only more meaningful, dialogue-driven, and anticolonial engagement with “cuisines, cooks, and eaters from cultures other than our own”, but also a candid recognition and engagement with the “colonizing relationship” to ethnic food and the side dish of guilt with which it is served (Heldke 2013 (2001): 405-406).

Ultimately, this could mean giving up our culinary curiosity for the sake of reaching a food culture postcolonialism.<sup>26</sup>

Where Heldke writes specifically from the perspective of the dominant force in this colonising relationship of foodways, it is pertinent to consider the role of the Other therein and the potential of subverting this relationship. In writing about the role of globalisation in the postcolonial context of Belize, Richard Wilk argues that those considered postcolonial subjects “now know more of the dimensions of their perceived inferiority”, which suggests an awareness that extends beyond the oppressive and dominating system of colonialism, almost to the point of its subversion (1999: 248). He argues that the general tendency in developing countries, towards a taste for “modern” or “foreign” foods, shows a “desire to know more about the world, to become more sophisticated, and acquire new forms of knowledge, and to make that knowledge material” (ibid.). Wilk’s comment illustrates that the desire for knowledge through adapting foodways to include and perhaps translate foreign, Western foods into a local, marginalised context is one attempt at a postcolonial approach to taste, which assists in destabilising the power hierarchies inherited from colonialism.

Tasting the Other, beyond its immediate (post)colonial implications, can also be considered from the perspective of culinary tourism. For Lucy Long, “culinary tourism” is an involved term which encompasses the complexity of perspectives on the foodways of the Other (2015d: 437). She defines culinary tourism as “the intentional, exploratory participation in the foodways of another – participation including the consumption, preparation, and presentation of a food item, cuisine, meal system, or eating style considered to belong to a culinary system not one’s own” (Long 2015d: 437). Moreover, she emphasises the agency of the tourist in making aesthetic<sup>27</sup> meaning of the foodways of the Other (Long 2015d: 437).

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<sup>26</sup> “If ‘eating ethnic’ cannot remain pleasurable once we acknowledge how domination shapes our exchanges with the Other, then we must acknowledge that it is a pleasure well lost” (Heldke 2013 (2001): 406).

<sup>27</sup> “‘Foodways aesthetic’ refers to the system for evaluating the quality, the pleasingness (or tastiness) of a food and the activities surrounding the preparation and consumption of that food” (Long 2015c: 192).

Long, however, describes the diversity in opinion of the nature of culinary tourism among scholars to range from a domineering, colonialist or hegemonic interpretation (such as that of Heldke) to one which aestheticises foodways into an art form (2015d: 445). She goes on to acknowledge that it is “[a] more optimistic interpretation [that] sees culinary tourism as a willingness of humans to experience the culinary worlds of other people, as a result of curiosity about other experiences and other ways of life” (2015d: 445). Such curiosity, however, needs to be interrogated for where it originates, as “culinary tourism is also always specific, depending on who is eating, who is feeding, the cultural context of consumption, and the kinds of power relations that are produced across the table” (Molz 2007: 78).

Fields (2002) discusses the relevance of cultural motivators (or curiosities) as a key consideration in the development of gastronomic tourism industries, which can also be defined as one form of the “business” of tasting Otherness. These motivators align closely with the tendency towards cultural omnivorousness as discussed earlier. Authenticity in this context becomes an important social marker for the traveller-taster,<sup>28</sup> as Bourdieu would have suggested, however with the luxury-necessity dichotomy looking vastly different to that of his time. The choices surrounding authentic sensory experiences on the part of culinary tourists are, according to Fields, indicative of a certain cultural ignorance (whether intentional or unintentional):

While the less experienced or less adventurous traveller may seek comfort in familiar foods in mass tourism resorts, the modern status-conscious traveller is likely to seek out the local cuisine, very often the ‘traditional’ or ‘peasant’ food not supplied by the mainstream tourism industry. Although these simple foods are often widely available, most tourists are not aware of the economic necessity that created them ... *Only the wealthy tourist can afford to travel long distances to taste the fruits of poverty* (Fields 2002: 40, own emphasis).

The cultural motivation for consuming local and authentic foods different from what is known by the tourist is marked by both an aesthetic (or intellectual) and a sensorial layer, as “[e]ating displays a physical as well as intellectual stance of openness toward and desire to consume difference” (Molz 2007: 85). Moreover,

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<sup>28</sup> “Food becomes the ideal sign of tourism consumption. Eating is an obligatory part of the holiday experience, and therefore lends itself as a tool of distinction for everybody. We can show off our cultural capital relating to the destination by eating ‘authentic’ food in the destination. The traveller can escape from the mass tourist hordes by finding that ‘hidden’ local restaurant where only ‘locals’ go” (Richards 2002: 11). See also Johnston and Baumann 2007, and Warde et al. 1999.

this experience of consuming Otherness is complicated by an imaginative projection, which Jean Duruz describes as “shad[ing] in the outlines of the ‘other’ to serve a cosmopolitan culinary imaginary, incorporating some ‘features’, rejecting others” (2004: 433).

The complexity of tasting Otherness and difference is also often interpreted only from a purely subjective perspective, to the neglect of the impact of this consumption on others. As Molz argues, it is “about playing with the cultural and bodily boundaries through which such differences are produced, challenged, and reinforced” (2007: 85), where these boundaries are often only relativised to the self. While the personal ingestion of food can be transformative, the interactions with others in this process is often ignored as contributing to this transformation, and results in a distancing between self and Other, rather than the facilitation of intimacy through the sharing of food.

Thus the socio-economic realities of tasting the Other as Fields describes above are also imbued with sensory realities, imaginative projections and bodily distancing that collectively contribute to the understanding of culinary consumption of difference as complex and hardly ever innocent or devoid of power relations. Culinary tourism is in fact one manifestation of what Heldke describes as “culinary colonialism”. Given the emphasis in sensory theory on the importance of recognising sensory experiences as synaesthetic, perhaps an anticolonial (as Heldke proposes) or postcolonial food culture would need to encourage a holistic sensory awareness of the foodways of the Other, which also embraces the value of disruptive or challenging encounters.

Carolyn Korsmeyer argues for such a holistic approach, in writing about the mutual dependency between vision and taste specifically, as guiding sensory registers of palatability and disgust (Korsmeyer & Sutton 2011). She states that a “complete” taste experience requires a synaesthetic approach, where “vision is the habitual instrument to resolve the ambiguity of taste sensations” (Korsmeyer & Sutton 2011: 463). Accordingly, sight assists the tongue in anticipating taste, and the pleasurability or disgust to follow. It is this anticipation, guided by vision, and supported by the other senses, which needs to prepare an individual for a taste of that which is “foreign”.

Ben Highmore also provides a sensory-driven discussion of cross-cultural exchange through the negotiation of somatic expression of intolerance through taste. He argues that a bodily negotiation of fear, fascination, and disgust all form part of the negative engagement with “foreign” foodways, and that the senses of taste and smell specifically and accordingly “play an inexorable role in everyday forms of racism. Yet they are also central components for convivial and cosmopolitan intercultural, inter-ethnic exchange” (Highmore 2008: 395). Thus from a sensory perspective, tasting Otherness should be recognised as facilitating “the various affective registers of experience (joy, aggression, fear) – [as they] reflect the multicultural shapes of a culture (its racism, its openness, its acceptance of difference)” (Highmore 2008: 396).

Duruz similarly writes that feeling guilt and unease can be transformative toward understanding how foodways are implicated in the greater operations of power and privilege in consuming foreign foods (Duruz 2004: 440). She argues that “a different kind of analytic journey – fraught, complicated, guilty – with its promise of different companions and ‘conversations’ – generous in moments of reciprocity and perceptive in acknowledging strategic uses of identity performance – is necessary” (2004: 441).

Whether considering the sensory experience of the foodways of the Other as satisfying curiosity or perpetuating colonialism, tasting cultural difference is a complex social endeavour. I would argue that a synaesthetic approach to foodways as premised in sensory theory, which recognises the complex inter- and intraplay of both subjective and communal sense-making experiences (both physiological and social), is critical to understanding the role of foodways and practices of eating in contributing to both the support and subversion of difference and Otherness.

The question could then be raised, is it possible to conceive of a socially and sensorially responsible approach to the consumption of “foreign” foodways? An approach that engages with both the sensorial and socio-economic realities that shape cultural difference and Otherness, and that seeks cross-cultural tolerance which goes beyond a “commodity fetishism in which the food experience bolsters the tourist’s identity and social status” (Molz 2007: 91), and rather challenges or transforms their perceptions of and encounters with Otherness and the role of foodways therein? This question is central to the effective possibilities of the sociomuseological practice as suggested in this dissertation.

In this section the theoretical foundation of this study has been established as based in sensory theory, specifically arguing for the adoption of a synaesthetic approach to the interpretation of foodways. In the following section I propose posthuman philosophy, specifically the ideas of difference, affect, entanglement and diffraction, as providing a potential conceptual reframing of the museum institution as a sensory space, towards conceiving a sociomuseological practice premised on the exploration of foodways.

## 2.3 A POSTHUMAN SENSIBILITY

### 2.3.1 MAKING “SENSE” OF THE POSTHUMAN

The museum ... is a stage for socialization; for playing out the similarities and differences between an *I* (or eye) confronting the *world* as object, and an *I* (or eye) confronting *itself* as an object among objects in that world – an adequation, however, that is never quite complete (Preziosi 2006: 75, original emphasis).

The incompleteness which Donald Preziosi describes of the *I/eye* in the museum context, is exactly why posthumanism, in conjunction with sensory theory, offers a rich alternative whereby the museum may be re-examined. Posthumanism confronts the *I/eye* with its own incompleteness. Conceptualised as humanist institutions, many conventional, modern museums perpetuate cultures of difference and sameness, of “like us” and “not like us” – dichotomies which seem dated in an age where social media platforms connect billions of users across gender, racial, religious and class boundaries in a much more fluid and dynamic way.<sup>29</sup> Considering the increasing interest in social institutions that seek to connect us with each other, such as digital, social media platforms, it appears the institution of the museum needs a philosophical reframing in order to remain relevant. Although sociomuseology could propose a pragmatic and political reframing (as discussed in 2.4), posthumanism could in turn provide an alternative, philosophical reconsideration of the museum, which also speaks to a more sensory engagement with its pedagogical purpose.

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<sup>29</sup> This is not to say that these platforms do not themselves perpetuate these same modernist dichotomies, but rather that their accessibility is connecting an unprecedented number of people from different backgrounds and beliefs with each other, whether in positive or negative ways.



Furthermore, given that this study is set within a postcolonial and post-apartheid context, the affinity of posthumanism with decolonisation is relevant to note. Achille Mbembe writes that decolonising knowledge, in the specific moment in which South Africa finds itself, “means developing a perspective which can allow us to see ourselves clearly, but always in relationship to ourselves and to other selves in the universe, nonhumans included” (Mbembe 2015: [Online]). Mbembe’s comment demonstrates a clear connection between the relationality that posthumanism supposes and attempts at decolonising knowledge institutions, such as museums, which traditionally carry the institutional baggage of colonialism and hegemonic Western discourse. It should be noted that although posthumanism is a discourse which developed in the West, its philosophical affinities with decolonisation allows it to provide a relevant and useful contribution to this theoretical framework.

Fundamentally, posthumanism as a philosophy developed from a dissatisfaction (or perhaps as Preziosi describes it, a feeling of “incompleteness”) with the notion of a “core humanity” which is accepted to be intrinsic to every human being (Soper cited in Badmington 2000b: 4). Freud and Marx, whose writings are also cited in the development of sensory theory, are credited for their role in the development of a “*theoretical anti-humanism*” (Badmington 2000b: 5, original emphasis). Where Freud’s theories of the individual unconscious directing our conscious lives proved influential in discounting a generalising human essence, Marx’s exposition of increasingly diverse socio-economic material realities showed the tangible influence of the material on the subjective individual (Badmington 2000b: 5). Readings has alternatively compared humanism to a cultural imperialism of sorts, suggesting an affinity between anti-humanist and anti-colonial perspectives.<sup>30</sup> Badmington also cites Jacques Lacan, Louis Althusser and Michel Foucault as influential theorists in the drive away from humanism towards anti-humanism, as they rejected the notion of Man’s innate tendency to think and act the same across societies (2000b: 7). They sought what scholar Kate Soper refers to as the “death of Man” in order to achieve societal change (cited in Badmington 2000b: 7).

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<sup>30</sup>“The suggestion that all cultures are fundamentally the same is a trademark of the imperialism of modernity, which seeks to erase rootedness and difference, to reduce everyone to a blank abstract humanity, a bleached-out indifference. To put it bluntly, saying that we are all just human is an act of imperialism, because it means we are all white under the skin. The last freedom, the power of the enslaved, lies in the refusal to relinquish the experience of difference to the cultural tourism of the oppressor” (Readings 2000 (1992): 126).

The “death of Man”, however, would not be an end in itself, for as Jacques Derrida proposed, “[t]o oppose humanism by claiming to have left it behind is to overlook the very way that opposition is articulated” (cited in Badmington 2000b: 9).

Instead, posthumanism suggests an “affirmative” alternative to such epistemic oppositions (Braidotti 2013: 37). The posthuman subject does not appeal to a common human essence, but rather embraces its mutual embodiment and embeddedness in the world, “based on a strong sense of collectivity, relationality and hence community building” (Braidotti 2013: 49). Rather than a common essence, the posthuman seems to embrace a common “sense”, such as theorised by Serres’s concept of “skin” (see 2.2.1). Serres’s philosophy of the “skin” considered through posthumanism allows it to function as a positive and affirmative metaphor for “common sense”, rather than a divisive one.<sup>31</sup> Elizabeth Grosz echoes the notion of a common sense by arguing that “[s]ensation is neither in the world nor in the subject but is the relation of unfolding of the one for the other through a body created at their interface” (2008: 72). It is this sensory interface which binds “us” (bodies) together. Rosi Braidotti (2013) argues that the affirmative, positive approach of posthumanism is developed in part from a challenge to the accepted humanist understanding and processing of Otherness. She argues for “dis-identification” of self, which “involves the loss of cherished habits of thought and representation, a move which can also produce fear, sense of insecurity and nostalgia” (Braidotti 2013: 168). Braidotti advocates for dis-identification as a move away from a humanist-centered self towards a posthuman self that embraces the uncertainty that relationality with Otherness brings. This is a fundamentally challenging perspective, as identity strikes at the core of who we believe ourselves to be. With dis-identification, however, posthumanism does not ask us to “give up” our identity, but rather to allow our identities to interact more fluidly and dynamically (“synthaesising”) with those of Others, even if there is the possibility that our identities will transform accordingly. Such an openness to being transformed, in posthuman terms, translates to an openness to difference, or in Lyotard’s terms “the differend”.

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<sup>31</sup> Donna Haraway similarly argues that the skin should not be considered a bodily boundary, but rather as the interface between the body and the world (cited in Barad 2007: 159).

### 2.3.2 DIFFERENCE/DIFFEREND/DISSENSUS

The posthuman emphasis on difference as an affirmative state of being reminds of Jean-François Lyotard's notion of the "differend". He describes the "differend" as "the unstable state and instant of language wherein something which must be able to be put into phrases cannot yet be" (Lyotard 1988: 13). This state of uncertainty includes silence, which can be read as any of the following types of phrases: "You wouldn't understand", "What we're talking about didn't happen", "It's difficult to explain or there are no words to explain", or "I don't know enough about what we're talking about" (1988: 13). It does happen, he posits, that silence can indicate a combination of these phrases to be of relevance in a particular situation. This notion of silence is challenging when at first considering the posthuman principles of relationality and community building as Braidotti describes (2013: 49). Contemporary exercises of community building and cross-cultural communication rely on expressions of vocality – voicing concerns with an emphasis on dialogue and verbal negotiation. Embracing silence, and those phrases that Lyotard describes, however, could be considered a posthuman approach to cross-cultural dialogue, which accepts and feels this silence and openly invites conflicting opinions. Lyotard also raises the argument for a "rethinking of the notion of community under a horizon of dissensus rather than of consensus, a dissensus distinct from atomistic individualism" (Readings 2000: 126, see also Lyotard 1984: 66). By allowing for Lyotard's dissensus and silence, and also engaging in dis-identification as Braidotti argues, we could create communal cultural meanings that consist of our mutually interactive (or intra-active, see below) and synthesised interpretations between ourselves, Others and the world, rather than of the traditional epistemic dualisms. Communal knowledge built in this way is founded *in* difference rather than *by* difference.

It would be pertinent also to touch on difference as approached from the perspective of marginalisation, in considering the context in which this research was conducted. Homi Bhabha's notion of cultural difference is relevant here, as he considers cultural identity as forming "'in-between', or in excess of, the sum of the 'parts' of difference (usually intoned as race/class/gender, etc.)" (1994: 2). This approach to difference resonates with a posthuman definition thereof, as it seeks to destabilise the dualistic view of difference and rather aims to uncover what lies between its poles. Bhabha elaborates his understanding of difference towards one which embraces hybridity, where "[t]he social articulation of difference, from a minority [or

marginalised] perspective, is a complex, on-going negotiation" (Bhabha 1994: 2). For Bhabha, difference is a critical factor towards the conceptualisation of hybrid identities that seek to connect centre and margin in a negotiated "third space" (1994). Cara Krmpotich brings Bhabha's notion of "third space" into practical consideration in discussing engagement (or rather negotiation) practices in museums, which resonates with a posthuman approach. She writes that "[i]n the third space of enunciation, a disruptive cultural translation occurs that unsettles and de-centres homogenizing narratives, and in particular Western national narratives" towards a hybridisation thereof (Krmpotich 2016: 88). In the museum context, "the idea of the third space moves us away from a model of encounter to a model of engagement" (Krmpotich 2016: 88), which seeks to engage with differences towards the construction of hybrid identities that are constantly in negotiation. The notion of a museological "third space", is thus one which reveals posthuman potential in its understanding of difference as a process of relational negotiation towards hybridisation.

Appadurai's notion of the *ethnoscape* is also relevant to this understanding of difference, as it proposes a complex, globalist interpretation of "flow" (see Castells below) of people through places, in negotiating community, kinship and the social realities of displacement (Appadurai 1996: 33). Appadurai uses the suffix *-scape* to acknowledge the multivarying perspectives which inform these manifestations of human movement, "as more persons and groups deal with the realities of having to move or the fantasies of wanting to move" (1996: 34). In the same tone, Cornel West argues for "new cultural politics of difference", which aims to engage a belief in heterogeneity and pluralism, through the particular mobilities and variabilities (and following Bhabha, negotiations) that encompass contemporary cultural identity formation (1993: 257). West, Bhabha and Appadurai thus argue for an understanding of difference which shies away from exclusionary distinction, towards one that embraces tolerance and hybridity, and the unpredictability which accompanies this approach towards building cultural identities and the knowledge communities of which they form a part. Although not writing from a marginalised perspective, Lyotard's proposition of postmodern (and I would suggest posthuman) knowledge is one which resonates with such an understanding of difference:

Postmodern [or posthuman] knowledge is not simply a tool of the authorities; it refines our sensitivity to differences and reinforces our ability to tolerate the incommensurable (Lyotard 1984: xxv).

Thus, through becoming sensitised to difference as it is understood in the posthuman sense, and allowing knowledge communities to engage with each other in silence or dissensus, knowledge authorities such as museum institutions could begin to be reimagined as posthuman institutions.

### 2.3.3 NETWORKING DIFFERENCES TOWARDS SENSORY ENTANGLEMENT

Becoming sensitised to difference as Lyotard encourages, however, is not merely a recognition of difference; it indicates rather a much more nuanced relationship to difference. Lyotard argues that each individual “self” cannot be extricated from the complexity of its interrelations with others in the fabric of society, but rather that “[y]oung or old, man or woman, rich or poor, a person is always located at ‘nodal points’ of specific communication circuits, however tiny these may be” (1984: 15). The notion of society functioning according to circuits or networks of difference is echoed by the theories of sociologist Manuel Castells.

In *The Rise of the Network Society*, Castells develops the idea of two parallel “spaces” according to which society is divided – the “space of flows” and the “space of places”:

The space of flows ... dissolves time by disordering the sequence of events and making them simultaneous, thus installing society in eternal ephemerality. The multiple space of places, scattered, fragmented, and disconnected, displays diverse temporalities ... [while selected] functions and individuals transcend time (Castells 2000: 497).

Castells argues that the “space of flows”,<sup>32</sup> instigated and progressed by globalising technologies, is instituting a new system of power relations where those that are most connected yield the most power, and those most disconnected and place-based are increasingly marginalised (Castells 2000: 507). Olu Oguibe writes from the perspective of marginalised societies who are frequently disconnected from this global system, and problematises its connectivity as exacerbating asymmetries of power and privilege (2002). He

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<sup>32</sup> “The theory of the space of flows starts from the implicit assumption that societies are asymmetrically organized around the dominant interests specific to each social structure” (Castells 2000: 445).

questions whether this system is contributing to an pervasive feeling of lagging behind the “moving posts of modernity” on the part of the marginalised, as those empowered by the “Net” may appropriate these vulnerable voices for their own ends (ibid.). Most notably, however, he writes that “we are faced with the advent of an exponential desire and readiness to locate and consume the Other in the form of material and visual symbols, without the moral or social responsibilities contingent on a physical encounter with that Other” (2002: 179).<sup>33</sup> Both Oguibe and Castells point to a system which is becoming increasingly unjust in terms of distribution of power (connectivity), and which needs to be reconciled through greater connections between marginalised “places” and global “flows”.

Considering Castells’s theory from a posthuman perspective, his dualistic view of flows and places seems contradictory to the posthuman view of society, which shies away from forming opposing or binary forces. It is, however, in his affirmative view of the possibility of societal change and transformation that his theoretical affinity with posthumanism emerges. Castells advocates against the institutional mechanisms that reinforce the widening chasm between “spaces of flows and places”,<sup>34</sup> arguing instead for an affirmative reimagination of the “network society”<sup>35</sup> which establishes positive connections between these spaces. He describes the “culture of the network society” to be “developed on the basis of a common belief in the power of networking and of the synergy obtained by giving to others and receiving from others” (Castells 2004b: 40).

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<sup>33</sup> Duruz and Molz’s notions of imaginative projection and bodily distancing in the process of tasting the Other are echoed here in the context of digital consumption.

<sup>34</sup> “Unless cultural, political, and *physical* bridges are deliberately built between these two forms of space [the space of flows and space of places], we may be heading toward life in parallel universes whose times cannot meet because they are warped into different dimensions of a social hyperspace” (Castells 2000: 459).

<sup>35</sup> “The Network Society” as developed by Castells, may be briefly defined as the tendency of society to structure itself in terms of the “Information Age”: “[I]nformation is the key ingredient of our social organization ... [and] flows of messages and images between networks constitute the basic thread of our social structure” (Castells 2000: 508).

The concept of the network is one that has been explored from a variety of scholarly perspectives, resulting in a hybrid definition thereof.<sup>36</sup> Verna Allee, writing from a business management perspective, argues that networks are patterns of organisation, akin to living systems, that adapt to changing contexts and are therefore continually in flux (2003: 49). For Allee, a network is organic and thus grows and changes according to the variances occurring within that network. Deleuze and Guattari's notion of a rhizome is also useful in explaining networks, as it can be understood as governed by "[p]rinciples of connection and heterogeneity: any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be" (1987: 7). The rhizome is a particular manifestation of a network which relies on relations of equality or horizontality, where other networks could rather be considered as organised around nodes which are more active than other points in the network. From a more sociological viewpoint, Manuel Castells writes that "networks do more than organizing activity and sharing information. *They are the actual producers, and distributors, of cultural codes*" (2004a: 427, original emphasis). Networks are not simply systems by which society is arranged, but rather define who we are and how we behave.

Given this definition of a network, Castells's principle of a sharing or networking society is one which is central to the posthuman belief in community building, relying on a positive interpretation of difference to do so. Difference in Castells's terms is materialised in the disconnections between places and spaces, and if made visible, could act as connecting forces between these parallel worlds. Castells further posits that the development of the "culture of the network society" is based in diversity and, through increased interaction between places and spaces, could end "the ancestral fear of the other" (Castells 2004b: 40). Another way of interpreting Castells's concept is through Bhabha's notion of translation and hybridity. Bhabha's notion of cultural translation is pertinent here (1994), as it is premised on a break or a "time lag" embedded in cultural difference, in order to reach a hybrid and connected understanding of cultural identities or concepts. Bhabha also writes that critique opens up "a space of translation: a place of hybridity" where political expectations are subverted to form new understandings that lie between conceptual spaces (1994:

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<sup>36</sup> Networks are often only considered from the perspective of technological systems, but some scholars have attempted to expand the definition of a network to include humanistic aspects. One such scholar is Manuel Castells, who approaches the subject from a Marxist-sociological perspective.



25). Thus critique leads the way to translations toward hybrid understandings between cultural communities, vested in cultural difference.

Castells's notion of the transformative power of a societal network in connecting individuals *through* their differences, between the spaces of flows and spaces, speaks to a synaesthetic concept of community, in the posthuman sense. Serres, from a sensory theory perspective, touches on the senses in their active participation in transformation through the interaction between self and the world. He describes the sensory as "both the constant presence and fluctuation of changing circumstances in the crown or halo bordering our bodies, around its limits or edges, inside and outside our skin, an active cloud, an aura" (Serres 2008 (1985): 303). For Serres, it is this reverberating yet unsettling quality of the senses that connects the individual between its place and its space, in Castells's terms – between its subjective situatedness and embodiment in a particular situation, and "the global laws of the world" (Serres 2008 (1985): 303). Although he describes this connection as a "mingling", Serres also refers to the notion of "mixtures", specifically in the context of transformation (2008 (1985): 28). It could then be understood that transformative cultural mixtures, or in other words, the developing culture of the network society, is contingent upon the mingling of our senses with ourselves, our Others and our material environment. Braidotti would perhaps describe this process as "becoming-posthuman", as an enactment of "the transformation of one's sensorial and perceptual co-ordinates" (2013: 193). She further explains, in more poetic terms, that "[i]t is an act of unfolding the self onto the world, while enfolding the world within" (Braidotti 2013: 193). Grosz calls upon Straus in describing this unfolding act, placing emphasis on the sensory experience of the "Now" happening in this process:

In sensory experience, there unfolds both the becoming of the subject, and the happening of the world. I become insofar as something happens, and something happens (for me) only insofar as I become. The Now of sensing belongs neither to objectivity or subjectivity alone, but necessarily to both together. In sensing, both self and world unfold simultaneously for the sensing subject ... (Straus cited in Grosz 2008: 8).

Considering the propositions of "mingling", "mixing", "unfolding", and "enfolding", these are all terms that evoke sensory impressions of actions in cooking, making their role in interpreting the relevance of foodways in a museological context not only relevant but vital. In order to arrive at a more nuanced

understanding of the senses and the body in “becoming posthuman” through these metaphorical cooking-actions (both subjective and communal), a brief discussion of affect theory proves useful.

### 2.3.4 AFFECTING THE BODY

The development of affect theory, although not exclusively seated in the domain of posthumanism, signals a broader academic interest in the role of bodily experience in human meaning making of the world – in feeling versus thinking. As Roelvink and Zolkos propose, “the validation of sensory experience within the affective field has meant that non-textual perceptual stimuli are considered crucial to the posthumanist reconfiguration of the subject and sociality” (2015: 4). Thus theories of affect have proven useful to the posthumanist critical engagement with subjectivity and community building, in examining sensory experience beyond its manifestation in textual language. In the same light, theories of affect also find affinity in posthumanism for its development of new expressions for interactions with Otherness, based on “sensing” and not cognition:

Our understanding of ‘sensation’, as a key register of affective impulses and intensities foregrounding knowledge and judgment, is thus a physically grounded perception or feeling, and one that results from the body coming into contact with the ecology of other – human and non-human – bodies” (Roelvink & Zolkos 2015: 4).

The body thus becomes the principal site of investigation and interpretation in order to make meaning of both self and Other. The skin, as also argued by Serres and Haraway mentioned earlier, can therefore be considered of utmost importance not as an exterior shell but a porous interface of the body. Affect theorists Seigworth and Gregg agree that “bodies [are] defined not by an outer skin-envelope or other surface boundary but by their potential to reciprocate or co-participate in the passages of affect” (2010: 2). It is the skin, therefore, that allows us to experience what is known as affect. Brian Massumi proposes that affect could be described as intensity, where “[i]ntensity is embodied in purely autonomic reactions most directly manifested in the skin – at the surface of the body, at its interface with things” (1995: 85). Massumi argues that in its autonomy, affect is a product of the skin, or of the body, rather than of conscious thought. In other words, affects are synonymous with feelings, although of a purely sensory nature, not to be confused with emotions, which are the products of cognition:

Intensity would seem to be associated with nonlinear processes: resonance and feedback which momentarily suspend the linear progress of the narrative present from past to future. Intensity is qualifiable as an emotional state, and that state is static – temporal and narrative noise. It is a state of suspense, potentially of disruption (Massumi 1995: 86).

For Massumi, affect is what is felt by the body in the moments before the mind recognises the feeling as an emotion – regardless of what the emotion may be. It is a state of feeling without “knowing” what the feeling is – or rather, the body “knows” before the mind does. Massumi continues to describe intensity (or affect) as being “filled with motion, vibratory motion, resonance”, and as “not yet activity” (1995: 86). Affect is therefore a state of what Seigworth and Gregg would term “inbetween-ness”, where bodies experience the “capacities to act and be acted upon” (2010: 1), awaiting the enactment of the recognition of affect into emotion. While many theorists collapse emotion and affect as one and the same, Massumi argues that “emotion and affect – if affect is intensity – follow different logics and pertain to different orders” (1995: 88):

Emotion is qualified intensity, the conventional, consensual point of insertion of intensity into semantically and semiotically formed progressions, into narrativizable action-reaction circuits, into function and meaning. It is intensity owned and recognized (ibid.).

Emotion is thus the recognition and interpretation of intensity by the self according to socially communicable signs that define the language of feelings known to society. This action of emotional qualification of affect, as Massumi describes it, also implies that intensity is “closed” or “captured”, contained by a language which, however, does not quite fully capture its meaning, allowing something of it to “escape” (1995: 96). In other words, affect is the experience of feelings that bodies share but that cannot be expressed between them in ways that can be understood.<sup>37</sup> Society lacks the right language with which to communicate affect, because “[t]he body has a grammar of its own that cannot be fully captured in language” (Shouse cited in Leys 2011: 442).<sup>38</sup> Even if there is no language of the body as such, we could

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<sup>37</sup> “Affect is not a personal feeling. Feelings are *personal and biographical*, emotions are *social* ... and affects are *pre-personal*” (Shouse cited in Leys 2011: 442, original emphasis).

<sup>38</sup> Grosz similarly argues that “[s]ensation requires no mediation or translation. It is not representation, sign, symbol, but force, energy, rhythm, resonance” (2008: 73).

consider synaesthesia as a potential method by which to attempt to better understand the body and its experience of affect in terms that are socially translatable.

Roelvink and Zolkos present Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the "body without organs" in an attempt to propose a type of synaesthetic approach to interpret affect (2015: 7). For Deleuze and Guattari, the "body without organs" is a body that is "permeated by unformed, unstable matters, by flows in all directions, by free intensities or nomadic singularities, by mad or transitory particles" (cited in Roelvink & Zolkos 2015: 7). In this body, it is not about erasing the nasal passages, taste buds, tactile nerves or retinas to become "without organs" but rather about conceptually integrating the sensory organs into a synaesthetic whole, allowing the body to experience affect for its fluidity and unpredictability.

Massumi affirms the need to interpret affect synaesthetically, as "the measure of a living thing's potential interactions is its ability to transform the effects of one sensory mode into those of another" (Massumi 1995: 96). In other words, a synaesthetic approach is crucial to a body's interactions as it allows one to translate affects through the senses (specifically the skin) into socially recognisable feelings and emotions. Massumi also discusses the virtuality<sup>39</sup> of affect, in arguing that affects are vested in the *potential* synaesthetic interactions of the body (1995: 96). Thus affects are the virtual (potential) feelings which our "bodies without organs" can most accurately qualify or interpret through synaesthetic methods into emotions or states of being that can be recognised and shared by others. I would argue that food and the body's synaesthetic experience thereof through foodways could provide an approachable platform through which to engage in a shared understanding of affect.

Ben Highmore argues for the need for development of a cultural inquiry into and subsequent communal understanding of synaesthesia and the body, which is sensitive to its entanglement with affect (see Barad below). He specifically discusses the sense of taste as a player in the entanglement in this potential inquiry, which he calls "social aesthetics":

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<sup>39</sup> "The virtual, the pressing crowd of incipencies and tendencies, is a realm of potential. In potential is where futurity combines, unmediated, with pastness, where outsides are infolded, and sadness is happy (happy because the press to action and expression is life)" (Massumi 1995: 91).

Here senses and affect bleed into one another. This is where every flavor has an emotional resonance (sweetness, sourness, bitterness). Here the bio-cultural arena of disgust (especially disgust of ingested or nearly ingested foods) simultaneously invokes a form of sensual perception, an affective register of shame and disdain, as well as bodily recoil (Highmore 2010: 120).

Highmore implies that food and the sense of taste especially is a powerful vehicle through which to begin to unpack a synaesthetic understanding of affect such that it translates to the “bio-cultural arena”, which is communal. He further argues that “[t]he strong relationship between food and taste is not simply based on the metaphoric association of ‘taste’ with discernment. Rather food is the sine qua non of taste's affective function” (Highmore 2010: 126). In other words, taste should not be understood communally only through its manifestation as preference as in its aesthetic conceptualisation, but rather through its sensitive entanglement with the materiality of food and our bodies.

Highmore refers to the potential to frame this entanglement in a political way, as a call to action, reminding of Shusterman's somaesthetics. Highmore argues for his proposed social aesthetics as being “a politics of the gut as much as the mind” where you are “constantly submitting your sensorium to new sensual worlds that sit uncomfortably within your ethos” (2010: 135-136). The proposition of transformation through sensory affects is crucial to this approach and provides a valuable insight into a posthuman philosophy of food, which engages with “the sticky entanglements of substances and feelings, of matter and affect [that] are central to our contact with the world” (Highmore 2010: 119). Based on this transformative (and political) understanding of affect and its potential for communal sensory understanding, I next discuss the posthumanist concepts of intra-action, entanglement and diffraction, as they could contribute to a new-materialist perspective on the museum as a sensory-communal (and commensal) space.

### **2.3.5 INTRA-ACTION, ENTANGLEMENT AND DIFFRACTION IN NEW MATERIALISM**

Within posthumanism, the new materialist approach focuses its discourse on the relationality between matter and meaning, proposing that “matter and meaning are mutually articulated” (Barad 2007: 152). That is to say, that rather than considering the material world objectively, new materialism sees (or senses) the

material through its relationality, through the process of it being understood. Thus matter is not considered “things” but “actions” to a certain extent (see Barad 2007). New materialism argues not only for active understandings but also for affirmative ones, in echoing Rosi Braidotti. According to Dolphijn and Van der Tuin, new materialism is a departure from the dualistic worldview of modernity, where relations were constructed along differences in a negative way (2012: 126). New materialism’s “philosophy of difference” rather argues for “the activity of creating concepts, which is an onto-epistemological activity”, defined by “a relationality that is affirmative” (Dolphijn & Van der Tuin 2012: 126-127). Thus new materialism argues for meaning making as an active, affirmative-differential approach to the world, where the social, economic, cultural and political intra-act and entangle (to borrow from Barad, see below).

Dolphijn brings new materialism directly to an understanding of food in his writing on foodscapes. He argues that the individual is shaped by and in turn also shapes territories of (material) food, space and (social) others as these elements are entangled in the experience of food (2004: 55). More importantly, the self through the premise of difference constructs these territories; for example, friends are identified by way of knowing one’s enemies, edible food is identified by way of what is not edible or palatable (2004: 56). Difference becomes a vital determinant of a new-materialist understanding of foodways and how the self negotiates relations and entanglements between spaces, social others and material foods.

The writing of Karen Barad has been influential in the development of posthuman thought in its unpacking of new materialism as a philosophy of relationality. According to Barad, it is important to understand the concept of matter as “agentive”, “not a fixed essence or property of things”, but rather as making meaning through differentiating<sup>40</sup> (2007: 136-137). Barad describes agency not as a state of being or something which someone acquires, but rather as an action, or more directly an “intra-acting” (Barad 2007: 178):

The neologism ‘intra-action’ signifies the mutual constitution of entangled agencies. That is, in contrast to the usual ‘interaction’, which assumes that there are separate individual agencies

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<sup>40</sup> “Difference cannot be taken for granted; it matters - indeed, it is what matters. The world is not populated with things that are more or less the same or different from one another. Relations do not follow *relata*, but the other way around. Matter is neither fixed and given nor the mere end result of different processes. Matter is produced and productive, generated and generative” (Barad 2007: 136-137).

that precede their interaction, the notion of intra-action recognizes that distinct agencies do not precede, but rather emerge through, their intra-action (Barad 2007: 33).

In other words, agency is an emergent capacity of matter, as it makes meaning through intra-action. Barad also uses the word “entangled” to describe this complex process of intra-activity. With entanglement, she arguably moves beyond Serres’s notion of “mixtures” and “mingling” towards a more forceful understanding where individualism is rejected in favour of individuals rather “emerg[ing] through and as part of their entangled intra-relating” (Barad 2007: ix). This philosophy of entanglement greatly influences how we perceive the Other, which according to Barad’s theories only emerges because of or through our-“selves”, bringing the Other uncomfortably and intimately close; “‘Otherness’ is an entangled relation of difference” (Barad 2007: 236). This intimacy of entanglement conceptually extends the sensory experience between material bodies, where “the other is not just in one’s skin,<sup>41</sup> but in one’s bones, in one’s belly, in one’s heart, in one’s nucleus, in one’s past and future” (Barad 2007: 393). Considered in this way, entanglement is a powerful and forceful challenge to the conceptual way in which we make meaning of the Other, where the senses act as the gateway to a much more intimate understanding of difference.

Barad furthermore discusses the action of differentiating as a practice of entanglement which does not oppose the Other but more affirmatively “mak[es] connections and commitments” (2007: 392-393). While intimate, entanglement evokes a constructive connection with the Other as opposed to a threatening one, bringing ethics into play. Barad discusses the posthuman understanding of an ethics of relationality to motivate for accountability and responsibility towards “the differential patterns of mattering of the world of which we are a part – but also the exclusions that we participate in enacting” (Barad 2007: 394). We are thus accountable to the world and responsible for ourselves as active participants in the processes of intra-action and entanglement with Others, as these processes make differential meaning of matter.

Given this call for claiming responsibility from the ethics of relationality, we could consider Barad’s diffractive methodology as a useful way of critically engaging with intra-actions and entanglements.<sup>42</sup> Barad

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<sup>41</sup> Serres and Haraway again come to mind.

<sup>42</sup> “A diffractive methodology provides a way of attending to entanglements in reading important insights and approaches through one another” (Barad 2007: 30).



describes her notion of diffraction as subverting difference through an engagement with entangling (2007: 381). From a methodological perspective, this could translate as “a useful counterpoint to reflection”; where reflective practices are denoted by highlighting similarities or one-directional mirroring, “diffraction is marked by patterns of difference” (Barad 2007: 71), encouraging a spectrum of interpretations. Donna Haraway describes the mapping of diffraction patterns as the potential result of a diffractive methodology; she argues that “a diffraction pattern does not map where differences appear, but rather maps where the *effects* of differences appear” (cited in Barad 2007: 72, original emphasis). Thus a diffractive methodology can be described as a critical engagement with processes of entanglement, resulting in diffraction patterns that indicate (or map, as Haraway suggests) the impact of affirmative differentiation. From a museological perspective, one could argue that a philosophical reimagining of the museum would do well to engage with this methodology and exhibit such intra-active (not interactive) “maps”, thereby disrupting its rootedness in modernist approaches that rely on oppositional dualisms and the hegemony of the visual. If we consider the posthuman ethics of relationality as guiding principle, and a diffractive methodology as a posthumanist, pragmatic, and more synaesthetic approach to museology, the museum could become a site of social justice, or even perhaps “affective” justice.

### 2.3.6 EMBODYING SOCIAL JUSTICE

While Barad’s ethics of relationality lends a political ambition to posthumanist philosophy, other writers within its camp feel that ambition is not a strong enough call to action. Papadopoulos argues from the leftist political perspective for a more directly engaged “insurgent posthumanism”, drawing from Wilson and Connery’s notion of “worlding justice” in the globalised context:

What does it mean to world justice today if not to enact openings, to build associations, to craft common, alternative forms of life? Worlding justice is a form of posthumanism which evolves out of the long tradition of the left by escaping its fatal obsessions with social power, the state and the event to come, and simultaneously avoids the happy and hopeless posthumanism that is content with counting and recounting the connections between humans and nonhumans (Papadopoulos 2010: 148).

Papadopoulos's view expresses a perceived frustration with predominant posthumanist thought as becoming almost too entangled with its theory to end up achieving political transformation at ground level. However, this is where Barad's diffractive methodology is vital – to move beyond what Papadopoulos states as simply "counting and recounting connections" towards an active and affirmative mapping of difference which could function as the starting point of transformation to achieve social justice. Although social justice in the museological context is inherent to sociomuseology (see 2.4), it would be pertinent to examine its fundamentals from a posthumanist perspective, as supported by the critical theories of bell hooks and a critical engagement with the philosophy of Ubuntu.

Nancy Fraser writes that, historically, social justice was equated with the politics of the redistribution of economic wealth, promoting an egalitarian approach to achieving justice based on material resources (1996, 2007). A shift has since occurred, however, which proposes a new claim to social justice known as the "politics of recognition" which is "difference-friendly" as opposed to assimilationist in its pursuit of equality (Fraser 1996: [Online]). Fraser argues as follows:

[Where the] politics of redistribution focuses on injustices it defines as socioeconomic and presumes to be rooted in the economic structure of society [such as exploitation, economic marginalization and deprivation] ... The politics of recognition, in contrast, targets injustices it understands as cultural, which it presumes to be rooted in social patterns of representation, interpretation, and communication [such as cultural domination, nonrecognition and disrespect] (Fraser 1996: [Online]).

Where the politics of redistribution would prompt "economic restructuring" as transformative, the politics of recognition rather suggests "cultural or symbolic change" in the form of recognising and celebrating previously marginalised identities (Fraser 1996: [Online]). Thus Fraser argues that issues of social justice are more complex than being attributed to only one manifestation of injustice, whether socio-economic or cultural, as "both are primary and co-original" (Fraser 1996: [Online]). She describes bodies that are affected by social injustice as "bivalent collectivities", in recognising their two-dimensional nature; she further argues that "virtually all real-world oppressed collectivities are bivalent. Virtually all suffer both maldistribution and misrecognition in forms where each of those injustices has some independent weight, whatever its ultimate roots" (Fraser 1996: [Online]). In other words, Fraser suggests that in general, social

justice can only be achieved by attending to both socio-economic and cultural injustices depending on the extent to which those factors are mutually not allowing for parity of participation.<sup>43</sup> Social justice is therefore wholly contextual, as “[e]verything depends on precisely what currently misrecognized people need in order to be able to participate as peers in social life. And there is no reason to assume that all of them need the same thing in every context” (Fraser 1996: [Online]). Fraser proposes the analytical tool of perspectival dualism as useful in the examination of cases of social injustice, as it “appreciates that neither the politics of redistribution nor the politics of recognition can be contained within a separate sphere. The reason is that the economic and the cultural interpenetrate” (1996: [Online]).

While Fraser’s theory may have up to this point seemed oppositional to posthumanist thinking in its reliance on a conceptual binary, it is in her suggestion of the mutuality or interpenetration of the politics of social justice where these perspectives affirm each other. She recognises the need to “think integratively – by seeking out transformative approaches to redistribution and deconstructive approaches to recognition” (Fraser 1996: [Online]). We could practically understand “transformative” to suggest consequential systemic change in the economic order, rather than surface-level policies that act as temporal solutions; and “deconstructive” to mean engagement with the systemic entanglements that cause misrecognition. In posthumanist terms, Fraser’s notion of transformative or deconstructive approaches could be collapsed into what Barad would describe as a diffractive methodology, as both these approaches could be considered rooted in an affirmative entanglement with the politics of difference with the aim of transformation or change.

Fraser has subsequently proposed a third dimension to her theory of perspectival dualism in drawing in what she terms the political perspective of representation:

The political in this sense furnishes the stage on which struggles over distribution and recognition are played out. Establishing criteria of social belonging, and thus determining

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<sup>43</sup> Fraser uses the term “parity of participation” as the normative measure of having successfully achieved social justice: “According to this norm, justice requires social arrangements that permit all (adult) members of society to interact with one another as peers” (Fraser 1996: [Online]).

who counts as a member, the political dimension of justice specifies the reach of those other dimensions: it tells us who is included, and who excluded, from the circle of those entitled to a just distribution and reciprocal recognition (Fraser 2007: 20).

In other words, the political perspective Fraser proposes is a determining factor in how the socio-economic and cultural aspects of social injustice are played out. Thus, besides maldistribution and misrecognition, misrepresentation adds another layer of complexity to social injustice, in addressing issues of inclusion and exclusion from participation in social life (Fraser 2007: 21). Fraser thus considers the need for social justice to be adequately approached from a three-dimensional perspective, rather than relying on her earlier proposed tool of perspectival dualism (Fraser 2007: 23). Again returning to posthumanist thinking, putting a number on the variety of dimensions from which one could understand social injustice would seem antithetical to a diffractive methodology as proposed by Barad. I would suggest, however, that Fraser's three politics of maldistribution, misrecognition and misrepresentation could form the integrated foundation of a diffractive methodology that addresses social injustice in an entangled and affirmative way. This means a critical engagement with the ways in which bodies are oppressed by the entanglement of socio-economic, cultural and political injustices and how one could use these entanglements to conceive of affirmative diffraction patterns towards achieving social justice.

Scholar bell hooks's writing provides valuable insight into how one may conceive of such a critical engagement. hooks's theories of engagement with race are particularly relevant, as they refer to social justice in arguing for a complex approach to understanding and subsequently addressing domination, whether socio-economic, cultural or political. On the subject of community building across racial boundaries, also of interest in the posthuman context, she argues for "a vigilant awareness of the work we must continually do to undermine all the socialization that leads us to behave in ways that perpetuate domination" (hooks 2003: 36). For hooks, "socialization" is an encompassing term which includes economic, political and cultural actions and indicates the pervasiveness of these actions in our everyday interactions in contributing to social injustice. She describes her work in the educational context in critically engaging with students to "unlearn racism" as one action which attempts to counter such socialisation:

Working with white students on unlearning racism, one of the principles we strive to embody is the value of risk, honoring the fact that we may learn and grow in circumstances where we

do not feel safe, that the presence of conflict is not necessarily negative but rather its meaning is determined by how we cope with that conflict. Trusting our ability to cope in situations where racialized conflict arises is far more fruitful than insisting on safety as always the best or only basis for bonding (hooks 2003: 64).

This embrace of the value of risk, of conflict and the trust in the human ability to manage such interactions with the aim of bonding across racial boundaries towards achieving social justice speaks to the posthumanist philosophy of affirming difference.<sup>44</sup> hooks further discusses racial interaction, in what could be read as posthumanist terms, by making the observation that “[s]egregation simplifies; integration requires that we come to terms with multiple ways of knowing, of interaction” (hooks 2003: 78). Here, Barad’s theories of intra-action and diffraction echo those of hooks, where both point to the politics of racial integration as an entanglement. Both posit that without entanglement, without the difficulty of engaging with difference in an affirmative as opposed to negative way, integration and subsequently social justice cannot be achieved. hooks also argues against a “discourse” of oppression which places pain, “the woundedness, the ugliness”, at a distance (1990: 215). She believes that “true resistance begins with people confronting pain, whether it’s theirs or somebody else’s, and wanting to do something to change it” (hooks 1990: 215). hooks’s theory thus brings into consideration the experience of affect as a political action – the entanglement with feeling towards transformation. Even though the pain hooks describes is an identified emotion or feeling, she prompts an engagement with pain that commences with a confrontation with affect, with pain before it is named as such, with woundedness. Entanglement with affect, in this way, could be understood as the embodying of social justice; without feeling the affect of struggle, transformation is near impossible.

Where hooks’s critical theories assist in illuminating what could be described as affective approaches to social justice in posthumanist terms, one could also refer to Ubuntu as a critical-African-humanist approach towards social justice which equally resonates with posthumanist thought. Ubuntu as a principle, although

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<sup>44</sup> “Dominant culture has tried to keep us all afraid, to make us choose safety instead of risk, sameness instead of diversity. Moving through that fear, finding out what connects us, reveling in our differences; this is the process that brings us closer, that gives us a world of shared values, of meaningful community” (hooks 2003: 197).

widely debated among scholars, is rooted in the expression “*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*, persons depend on persons to be persons” (Shutte 2001: 3). According to Mkhize, the word “Ubuntu” in an etymological sense “points to a being that is oriented toward becoming: it refers to an ongoing process that never attains finality ... and this evidently implies an idea of motion” (Mkhize 2008: 41). This understanding of Ubuntu affirms a definite posthumanist resonation, specifically to Braidotti’s notion of becoming posthuman and Barad’s concepts of intra-action and entanglement. Mkhize elaborates on his theory of becoming in arguing that through the participative process of making meaning, or knowing, emerges “an ethic that prioritises social obligations to others, to one’s community and to the cosmos in general. Individuals have to fulfil their duties and obligations to others and to the natural environment in order to maintain social equilibrium” (Mkhize 2008: 38). Here, the posthuman ethics of relationality as proposed by Barad seem directly aligned to the ethics Mkhize argues Ubuntu to embody.

Leonhard Praeg takes this ethics forward towards a political understanding of Ubuntu, which he frames as a critical humanism:

In critical humanism, the “human” is a secondary concept ... a more fundamental or primary concern is with the relations of power that systematically exclude certain people from being considered human in the first instance (Praeg 2014: 12).

Praeg’s political approach to Ubuntu reflects the fundamental beliefs of hooks’s critical theory as well as that of the posthumanist ethics of relationality, and calls upon a diffractive methodology towards understanding what Fraser would describe as the political dimension of social injustice defined by the politics of misrepresentation.

Praeg specifically argues for Ubuntu to be understood as a mode of critique, as opposed to a potential ideology (2014: 20):

Advancing Ubuntu as critical humanism requires us to synchronise the liberation or decolonisation of our understanding of *what it means to be human*, while secondly, reflecting *self-critically* on all the paradoxes and aporias that shadow our attempts at thinking both within and against dominant intellectual traditions and thirdly, exploring what

it would mean to deploy this critical anthropology as *emancipatory praxis* (Praeg 2014: 21, original emphasis).

Praeg's proposal therefore suggests a three-fold yet integrated or "synchronised" critical action towards the achievement of social justice through Ubuntu philosophy. In posthumanist terms, his first action roughly translates to "disidentification" of self as proposed by Braidotti, his second action aligns with Barad's notion of entanglement, and his final proposition of "emancipatory praxis" suggests a clear affinity with Barad's diffractive methodology. Praeg's critical humanist understanding of Ubuntu thus provides a unique and localised lens through which to consider social justice from a posthumanist perspective, which relies on an active and participatory approach.

Similar to hooks, Praeg also cites the importance of engaging with the affective capacity of violence in order to achieve real transformation or change. He argues that "[t]he inhumane and the unforgivable are necessary limits that make humanism and forgiveness possible. But an acknowledgement of the necessity of limits implies an acknowledgement of the inescapability of violence, for where there is a limit, there is policing, control and coercion" (Praeg 2014: 25). In other words, in order to reach an understanding of what it means to be "human", or rather to become "posthuman", a critical engagement with the violence of the inhumane is necessary. We need to see what lies beyond the limit of the human, to become affirmatively entangled with the violence, or what hooks calls "the woundedness," of difference, in order to begin the process of posthuman becoming towards achieving social justice.

Thus it could be argued that there are clear philosophical yet actively political affinities between social justice theory and posthumanism, as is supported and affirmed by the critical theories of bell hooks as well as a critical understanding of Ubuntu as put forth by Mkhize and Praeg. Although there are many pragmatic aspects to the above-mentioned approaches that are relevant to the study, in the context of this research, which adopts a museological approach, social justice is most practically embodied in the goals of sociomuseology. In the following section, I discuss the evolution of the sociomuseology movement as a reaction to its modernist museological beginnings and its philosophical affinities to sensory theory and posthumanism. In these latter discussions I sketch the initial basis for a sociomuseological practice which is



informed by the senses and the philosophy of posthumanism, with the practical aim of functioning as an exploration of foodways.

## 2.4 A SOCIOMUSEOLOGICAL SENSIBILITY

Sociomuseology is, in addition to a steadily growing academic undertaking, an explicitly political movement in the museum world towards claiming a developmental role for museum-type spaces, whether social, political, cultural or economic. It is vested in the belief that museology can make a viable contribution towards social justice. In this way, sociomuseology as a discipline marks a definitive departure from the modernist museological paradigm, and is marked by the influence of several schools of new museological thought in its developmental trajectory.

### 2.4.1 FROM MODERNIST MUSEOLOGY TO SOCIOMUSEOLOGY

Although an etymological account of the museum may not be entirely relevant here, a brief outline of its conceptual development is useful towards gaining an understanding of sociomuseology as a movement. Tony Bennett discusses the concept of the museum as having been established alongside “the emergence of a new set of knowledges – geology, biology, archaeology, anthropology, history and art history – each of which, in its museological deployment, arranged objects as parts of evolutionary sequences (the history of the earth, of life, of man, and of civilisation) (Bennett 1995: 96). Bennett argues that it is the integration between these different types of knowledge and the pedagogical use of the museum that resulted in the modernist museum institution, a space of classifying the material world into historical significance (1995: 96). Donald Preziosi similarly argues that the museum has thus been institutionalised as “evidentiary and documentary artefact” while also acting as a tool by which the public may encounter or “practise” history (2006: 72). He considers this notion of the museum as one that stakes its claim in the production of a type of modern fiction: “In no small measure, *modernity itself is the museum’s collective product and artefact; the supreme museographic fiction*” (Preziosi 2006: 72, original emphasis). Preziosi compares the museum to other modern institutions that have played a role in the production of knowledge, such as universities, religious organisations, and theatres, but argues specifically that “museological practices have played a

fundamental role in fabricating, maintaining, and disseminating many of the essentialist and historicist fictions which comprise the social realities of the modern world" (Preziosi 2006: 56). The traditional museum has in this sense been conceptualised as a tool of history, marked by its purpose in functioning as a window into the past, for "humanity" to better understand itself.

Framing the museum as a window also reveals its problematic history as a knowledge institution in service of a modern Western discourse defined by the "gaze", through which discriminatory systems such as colonialism have dominated the Other, often associated with "lower" and therefore less intelligent senses (Classen & Howes 2006). Vision, "the sense that acts at a distance", has become the primary method of knowing (and sensing) the world, and has facilitated a knowledge culture defined by "separation between knower and known, subject and object" (Heldke 1992: 205-206); that is to say, by difference. The museum, accordingly, has become one of the defining institutions where the "gaze" has contributed to the establishment of difference. Tony Bennett suggests the term "civic seeing" as encompassing the learned skill required by museum visitors to navigate the optically focused methods of knowledge acquisition in the conventional museum, not only in relation to objects, but to other visitors as well (2006: 263). "Civic seeing" is a practice which is rooted in a history of hierarchical difference, and is especially evident in those museums with origins in colonial systems of racialised categorisation (Bennett 2006: 278).

On the other hand, James Clifford's proposition of museums as "contact zones," borrowing from Mary Louise Pratt,<sup>45</sup> is an influential attempt at a theoretical destabilisation of the hegemony of knowledge creation in the museum, especially in the contexts of colonial legacy and multicultural audiences (1997). The museum as "contact zone" challenged these institutions to adopt a wider lens of interpretation and inclusivity, although, as some have critiqued (see Boast 2011), even a wide lens yet cannot adequately bring into focus the complexities of cross-cultural encounter. I would add that the contact zone principle in the museum context, although promising in some ways, still excludes those forms of knowledge acquisition that require a multisensorial approach, which is often central to communities cast as different or Other.

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<sup>45</sup> The term "contact zone" was coined by Mary Louise Pratt, who described it as a "term to refer to social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today" (cited in Boast 2011: 57).

The definition of museums as “contact zones” arose from an emerging awareness of the problematics of a museology ensconced within a Western knowledge discourse, and the relationship between the museum, its experts and communities at large (especially those defined by Otherness) has entered the debate. Museum curators have experienced a shift in their professional practice from acting as experts to acting as mediators between collections, museum spaces and the public (Onciul 2015: 7). Notions of inclusivity and engagement have caused a fundamental change in the way museums are perceived and how they are defined, especially by communities considered marginalised. As Onciul argues, however, “[w]hile community engagement is a very important step forward, it is not an automatic solution to the issues and problems of representing source communities formerly known simply as ‘Others’. Collaboration creates new relationships between museums and communities that have their own issues and dynamics that deserve further exploration” (2015: 1-2). Defining the museum thus becomes an increasingly difficult task, and “the difficulty of satisfying multiple constituencies at the same time greatly complicates museum practice” (Rice 2003: 89). Danielle Rice suggests that “museums are dynamic, complex social institutions that are constantly reinventing themselves in response to self-scrutiny and external stimulus” (2003: 79), and therefore require a definition that reflects its constantly changing purpose in response to these conditions.

The International Council of Museums (ICOM)<sup>46</sup> drafted the definition of “museum” most widely accepted today in practice, which states:

A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment (ICOM 2016: 2).<sup>47</sup>

Although a much more encompassing definition than could be associated with its inception, the museum is here yet constrained by its own “humanity”. Even ICOM itself has admitted to its current definition being “too prescriptive” in that it promotes a “corporatist” view of the museum (ICOM 2010: 58). In other words,

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<sup>46</sup> ICOM is the global governing body of the museum profession and is considered the institutional authority on all matters relating to the museum.

<sup>47</sup> This definition was first drafted and adopted as part of the ICOM statutes in 2007, but was reaffirmed under Article 3, Section 1 of the statutes adopted at the 2016 Extraordinary General Assembly.

even in its current understanding, the museum is constrained by that which its *profession* deems as constituting “humanity” – the curator or museum expert here retains a position of power. An alternative definition, proposed by French museologist Bernard Deloche, is one that retains a hold on the “human” but provides some conceptual flexibility. He argues that a museum could also be “a specific function which may or may not take on the features of an institution, the objective of which is to ensure, through a sensory experience, the storage and transmission of culture understood as the entire body of acquisitions that make a man out of a being who is genetically human” (Deloche cited in ICOM 2010: 58). Deloche’s statement adds some complexity to the ICOM definition, in that it proposes that a museum may or may not be a formal space (an institution), which relies on sensory communication (not just the visual), about anything that makes us “human”. Although the format and the process of the museum is thus opened up, the museological subject is still bound to the concept of “humanity”, which is a constraining principle as the assertion of humanity implies the inclusion and exclusion of material elements that either make or do not make us “human”. Deloche, a proponent of the notion of the “virtual museum” (see 2.4.3.), thus provides us with an understanding of the museum which attempts to transcend its traditional environmental and sensory constraints, but nonetheless is bound by humanist understandings of culture.

Deloche’s theories, although not necessarily explicitly aligned with the new museology movement, form part of what is termed the “museological turn” that occurred in the 1980s. In France called “*la nouvelle muséologie*” (the new museology), the movement ushered in a new era for museological thought that “emphasised the social role of museums and its interdisciplinary character, along with its new styles of expression and communication” (ICOM 2010: 55, see also Onciul 2015: 4-5). New types of museums called “ecomuseums” came into existence, and community museology gained prominence. These new avenues in museology were specifically vested in the meaning of place and the value of local or community heritage. The term “ecomuseum” was conceptualised by French museologist Hugues de Varine in 1971, in an effort to describe his observations in museology in France at the time, as well as envisioning its future. “Ecomuseums”, derived from “ecosystems”, focus their efforts on increasing interactions between communities and their local environments, or “*territoires*”, which denotes a specific understanding of place (Davis 2005: 369). This understanding has freed museums from being defined by their architectures and

rather enlarged the definition of the museum to include sites of communal interest (specifically memory), integrated into greater society, yet defined by the locality in which it is based.

Community museology, in turn, has put an arguably greater emphasis on the people within a locality as the crucial factor over the sites themselves. The influence of James Clifford's notion of the museum as "contact zone" is pertinent here (1997). Andrea Witcomb argues that the museum in contexts of diverse cultural communities needs to be reimagined as "an unstable institution attempting to come to grips with the effects of the colonial encounter, an attempt which has both positive and negative affects [sic] on those involved" (cited in Boast 2011: 59). The shift in focus towards the communities themselves is thus of critical importance towards negotiating these positive and negative cultural effects in the museum. Elizabeth Crooke more radically argues that "[i]t is people who bring the value and consequence to objects and collections; as a result, if a museum cannot forge associations with people it will have no meaning" (2007: 131). In agreement with Giménez-Cassina (2010), Crooke's approach is indicative of a perhaps too narrow, Anglo-Saxon approach to new museology (see below), which relies on an understanding of community which is focused on its people to the subordination of its environment and the impact of place. For Crooke, although the community is always open to change, it is its definition at any point in time *according to specific stakeholders* (people) in positioned territories that will define what its museum could be. In this understanding of community museology, the museum will always be a mechanical tool in the hands of the community, however that community is defined. This interpretation of community museology evidently indicates a different approach to a new type of museology than explored by ecomuseums, although at the time was symptomatic of a global shift in museum thinking.

As the new museology gained traction, the Movement for a New Museology (MINOM) was established at a formal gathering in Quebec in 1984, and became the first organising body to further the aims of the movement. In 1992, at a convening meeting, MINOM drafted the Declaration of Caracas, which "called for the acknowledgement of museums as means of communication in the service of communities. It proposed that museums would become social managers, working with communities to transform reality" (Santos 2010: 6). This declaration signalled a definitive turning point for the future of the museum world, which was

increasingly called upon to contribute to the contemporary political dialogues that had an impact on their publics. By the end of the 1990s,

[t]he sustainable development agenda, social inclusion policies in the UK, the strengthening of emancipation movements (such as the indigenous movements in North America) and the growing multiculturalism in European countries promoted a new age of transformations in museums. A renewed participation paradigm began to focus on the relations between museums and multiple (some new) stakeholders (Santos 2010: 6).

Santos mentions the increase in social inclusion policies in the British context, which could be considered the fundamental basis for the Anglo-Saxon approach to new museology, first proposed by Peter Vergo (1989). Social inclusion policies are premised on the recognition that “all museums have an obligation to develop reflexive and self-conscious approaches to collection and exhibition and an awareness and understanding of their potential to construct more inclusive, equitable and respectful societies” (Sandell 2002b: 4). Social inclusion, in other words, is a policy-driven transformation mechanism which attempts to allow for greater interaction between existing museums and the communities they serve. In an Anglo-Saxon context, where the museum institution is a familiar concept, such policies would seem transformative, even though in practice “many equate the issues solely with outreach, education or access projects, ignoring the wider imperatives for changes in mainstream museum philosophy and practices” (Dodd & Sandell 2001:4). Although social inclusion has many positive aspects, it has thus provided arguably superficial, policy-driven steps toward museum transformation in its context. Beyond social inclusion, valuable contributions to the dialogue on the social justice function of museums have come from a variety of scholars in the Anglo-Saxon context, including Robert Janes, Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, and Elaine Heumann Gurian.

Robert Janes writes that a preoccupation with the administrative and managerial functions of the museum has prevented it from truly engaging with its purpose of serving society, and of being socially responsible or just (2009, 2010). He argues for the advent of a “mindful museum”, to cite Gopnik, which seeks sustainability and justice through the empowerment of communities and an awareness of the “interconnectedness of our world and its challenges” (Janes 2010: 330). His proposition follows on that of Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, who argues for the “post-museum” as a rebirth of its modernist conceptualisation. The post-museum is proposed as a space in which “[k]nowledge is no longer unified and monolithic; it

becomes fragmented and multi-vocal" (2000: 152). Where Hooper-Greenhill and Janes argue for a reframing of the social function of museums towards its destabilisation, Elaine Heumann Gurian argues that museums may consider mimicking other social institutions that provide a broader range of social services, towards its reframing in serving a social justice purpose. In "Museum as Soup Kitchen" Gurian advocates for museum spaces to become more akin to community centres. Through a broadening of services to a wider variety of people using the resources at their disposal and vested in the community itself, she argues, museums could transform "into something recognized by all as essential for our collective wellbeing" (Gurian 2010: 83). In all of these calls to action, the role the museum plays in contributing to the well-being of communities, and to social justice, is vital.

These scholars, among others, have made an influential impact on the way museums are perceived in contexts where their visitors are broadly familiar with the purpose and systems of the institution of the museum. Considering other geopolitical contexts where the museum has not been embedded as a permanent and influential societal fixture, the Anglo-Saxon approach to new museology would not seem entirely relevant, or at least in need of translation. Hence, the parallel development of the Latin new museology in primarily the Portuguese-, Spanish- and French-speaking world provides a different, perhaps more radical, approach under the paradigm of sociomuseology. As Santos notes, "sociomuseology can be seen as the result of new museology's maturity" (2010: 8). Where new museology was a new way of understanding the role of museums in society, sociomuseology framed its study as a reversal, arguing rather that society creates the conditions from which our understandings of museums should function (Santos 2010: 8). This understanding necessarily relies on an interdisciplinary approach, "which makes it [sociomuseology] draw on perfectly consolidated areas of knowledge and relate them with Museology itself" (Moutinho 2007: 39). Moutinho argues that it is its interdisciplinarity that gives sociomuseology the ability to draw museology into sustainable development dialogues, and frame the museum as a potential platform for discussion about development (Moutinho 2007: 39). Sociomuseology therefore developed as a specific evolution within new museology, from a grassroots perspective into a social movement, drawing upon the strengths of a diversity of knowledge disciplines both academic and indigenous. It is the emphasis on indigeneity and community grassroots mobilisation, which validates sociomuseological practice as a relevant and useful approach to this research, considering the study context as one in which the museum is



yet a relatively foreign concept, and where cultural projects are often only considered valuable in light of their contribution to community development.

In 2013, the MINOM Rio 2013 Declaration was adopted by MINOM and currently serves as the most contemporary call to action for the sociomuseology movement. Chagas, Santos and Glas describe the Declaration as “the assertion of a museology that entirely and fearlessly states its intention to contribute to social, political and economic change” (2014: 102).<sup>48</sup> Sociomuseology is thus considered the facilitation mechanism through which “new relations, new battlegrounds, and new processes of empowerment” for development could be established on museological grounds (Chagas et al. 2014: 103). These authors also confirm that sociomuseology is a “transitory museology”, not bound to permanent states of political being but rather respondent to the fluctuating needs of societies as they change at an increasingly fast pace and across social, economic and cultural boundaries (2014: 103). Sociomuseology is thus an approach which requires a holistic, flexible and arguably synaesthetic, openness to society in its complexity of differences in an effort to facilitate the creation of “new processes of empowerment” towards achieving social justice (Chagas et al. 2014: 103).

The transitory and interdisciplinary nature of sociomuseology brings to mind the same characteristics in synaesthesia as described in 2.2. Synaesthesia is the intersensory approach to meaning making through the senses, between our bodies and the world, where sociomuseology is an interdisciplinary approach to making meaning from the observed, or perhaps “sensed”, social injustice between our bodies and the world. In the following section I explore the affinity between sensory theory and sociomuseology, specifically in terms of making meaning of foodways.

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<sup>48</sup> The MINOM Rio Declaration affirms the explicitly political stance of sociomuseology, and considers the importance of “[e]mphasizing the understanding that Sociomuseology is a political exercise that can be taken on by any museum, regardless of its type” (MINOM 2013: [Online]).

#### 2.4.2. "SENSING" SOCIOMUSEOLOGY

Sociomuseology most vividly meets sensory theory in the expression of synaesthesia, described as the complex process of making meaning through intersensory experiences that create connections between our sensory selves, Others and the world. Where museology in its traditional or modernist application was defined by the hegemony of the visual,<sup>49</sup> sociomuseology could be argued to embrace a synaesthetic approach in that it sensitively draws or "senses" its existence from the socio-political and economic conditions of communities. Edwards et al., writing from a sensory perspective on museums, call for the necessity of transformation in the museum, in an effort to encourage synaesthetic engagement:

The politics of change and liberation within the museum, as elsewhere, depend on critiquing the sensory relations it establishes between objects and people and encouraging active debates concerning such sensory relations. Immanent within each object or person is a world of relationships which can be explored in detail on a small scale or followed in broader outline into larger political structures (Edwards et al. 2006b: 24).

They touch on an important connecting point between sociomuseology and sensory theory, in implying that sensory relations can be traced from the individual or embodied level to a socio-political level. From a sociomuseological perspective, the senses or sensory experience could play a role in the transformative interventions that seek to make a positive contribution to community development. From a sensory theory perspective, this intervention should necessarily be synaesthetic in order to critique the hierarchy of sensory interactions as they exist in the modernist museum space.

Shusterman's project of somaesthetics, as well as Highmore's sensory-oriented social aesthetics of affect, arguably provides the most useful interpretation of the ability of sensory theory to meet the political objectives of sociomuseology. Shusterman's proposition of "the art of eating" (2016) is, in fact, a political action, as it argues for a synaesthetic and socially mindful approach to eating that not only aims to better

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<sup>49</sup> "[M]odernity is integrally related to the control of sensory experience, from the transformation of smell through sanitation, to the suppression of sound through the regulation of noise, to the control of embodied relations through the ordering of social space" (Edwards et al., 2006b: 16). In this sense, museums could be seen as one of the most notable examples of how this control is exerted in the social realm.

oneself but to better the community with which one eats. Although it would seem obvious to say that the table then becomes the site of sociomuseological practice as it functions as the point of interaction between the body and Others in “the art of eating”, not all communities share food in a confined or dedicated space. Sociomuseology in its transitory nature as a practice, rather than functioning as a museum space, poses the ideal platform from which to engage with somaesthetics and its synaesthetic properties with the aim of exploring foodways towards the possibility of seeking cross-cultural tolerance and understanding. Similarly, it is useful to consider Highmore’s discussion of social aesthetics as a political approach to affect which also supports a synaesthetic embodiment (2010) when conceiving of a sociomuseological approach to exploring foodways. In arguing for the development of a “politics of the gut”, Highmore reflects on the ability of affect to contribute to shared social understanding through an emphasis on synaesthesia. A sociomuseological practice with the political ambition of contributing to cross-cultural understanding through foodways could be richly informed by a “politics of the gut” where affect functions through intersensory means towards attempting mutual understanding and tolerance.

Considering the joining of these two perspectives of sensory theory and sociomuseology, then, foodways presents itself as an ideal museological matter of study. Given the complex network of meanings generated from foodways, from its aesthetic pleasures, to its social differences and beyond, a sociomuseological practice conceptualised through the senses (synaesthetically) would arguably most accurately capture its differential complexity. The synaesthetic approach would attempt to capture the holistic sensory understanding of such foodways and the concomitant socio-cultural complexity thereof, while the sociomuseological practice could transform this understanding into a political statement – one that for example, as in this study, seeks to expressly address issues of cross-cultural tolerance and understanding. This political statement, however, would benefit from an additional layer of understanding created by adopting an entangled approach, as drawn from posthumanism.

### **2.4.3 SOCIOMUSEOLOGY AND ITS ENTANGLEMENT TOWARDS THE POSTHUMAN MUSEUM**

The possibility of a posthuman museum as a concept functions as a philosophical contribution to sociomuseology within this theoretical framework, and one that could inform a sociomuseological practice

as proposed in Chapter 5. In returning to Barad: her diffractive discussion of memory provides a first entry point into the notion of a posthuman museum as sociomuseological practice. Although not exclusively functioning in the preserve of memory, museums have through history been framed as institutions of the past, acting as visual repositories of material culture that are tied to communal memories. Barad critiques the perception of memory as a matter of the past,<sup>50</sup> and by implication then, also a matter of museums as such (2007: ix). She argues that memories are constituted through the active “enlivening and reconfiguring of the past and future”, that “like all intra-actions ... extend the entanglements and responsibilities of which one is a part” (Barad 2007: ix). Given this view, the museum should be considered not as a repository of static memory, but rather as an active participant in the entanglement of past and future, meaning and matter.

Jacques Derrida discusses this entanglement in the context of deconstructing the archive, which could translate to and affirm the context of the museum. Derrida asserts that the archive is not a historical fact, but rather “a question of the future ... the question of a response, of a promise and of a responsibility for tomorrow” (Derrida 1998: 36). Derrida continues to argue that the concept of the archive is infinite: “[i]t opens out of the future”, because the archiving process always creates a “remainder” (Derrida 1998: 68), or in other words an object “to be continued”.<sup>51</sup> In posthuman terms, this notion of the archive, and by relation the museum, plays to the infinitesimal nature of entanglement. Thus the museum could be reimagined as being in perpetual posthuman “becoming”, in Braidotti’s terms, as it seeks to intra-act (or entangle) with its visitors in transformation of their “sensorial and perceptual co-ordinates” (2013: 193). The posthuman museum, in this sense, will never be finished being built – or rather, will never exist in a finished form, but rather will always be entangled in process.

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<sup>50</sup> “Memory is not a record of a fixed past that can ever be fully or simply erased, written over, or recovered (that is, taken away or taken back into one’s possession, as if it were a thing that can be owned)” (Barad 2007: ix).

<sup>51</sup> This infinitesimal nature of the archive is the cause of what Derrida terms “archive fever”: “It is to burn with a passion. It is never to rest, interminably, from searching for the archive right where it slips away. It is to run after the archive, even if there’s too much of it, right where something in it archives itself. It is to have a compulsive, repetitive, and nostalgic desire for the archive, an irrepressible desire to return to the origin, a homesickness, a nostalgia for the return to the most archaic place of absolute commencement” (1998: 91).

The ethics of posthumanism lastly poses a political responsibility for the museum in a posthuman incarnation as sociomuseological practice. As a site of human meaning making, the concept of the museum is fundamentally tasked with making sense of the “human” as we have come to understand it. As Braidotti argues, however:

[T]he posthuman predicament enforces the necessity to think again and to think harder about the status of the human, the importance of recasting subjectivity accordingly, and the need to invent forms of ethical relations, norms and values worthy of the complexity of our times (2013: 186).

Given this predicament, one could posit then that the museum should be brought to task to facilitate the rethinking of the status of the human, as Braidotti proposes, to assist us in diffractively understanding our entanglements.

As discussed in 2.3.5, the ethics of posthumanism that argues for accountability in conceptualising new frameworks of understanding the “human” in an affirmative-differential or entangled way, can be seen as a philosophical foundation for the practice of sociomuseology. Based on this foundation, sociomuseological practice could be considered a method of activating entangled meaning making *toward* social justice. The museological format that this activation takes is thus a political statement, as described in 2.4.2. The visualisation of the museum as a statement is, however conceptually challenging, perhaps most eloquently imagined in the notion of the “virtual museum”. The virtual museum is described by Deloche as a “concept which globally identifies the problem areas of the museal field, that is to say the effects of the process of decontextualisation/recontextualisation ... it is the museum in its *exterior theatre of operations*” (Deloche cited in ICOM 2010: 59-60, original emphasis). Although not an explicitly sociomuseological term, I would argue that it sits well within the sociomuseological paradigm, also lending a more global perspective to its potential impact beyond the physicality of local communities, as is the tendency within current sociomuseological practice.

Calum Storrie proposes the notion of the “Delirious Museum”, which is another useful conceptual construct by which to define a sociomuseological practice in posthuman terms. Storrie develops the “Delirious

Museum” within the context of urban design, arguing that “city in flux is the model for the Delirious Museum” (2006: 20). Flux and movement is key to his concept, as he argues that the aim of the visitor in the “Delirious Museum” would be to wander, not following fixed patterns or meanings but allowing for an open-ended experience (Storrie 2006: 20). Moreover, for Storrie, the “Delirious Museum” exists in the in-between, neither here nor there:

It is something both built and unbuilt. It *inheres* in certain buildings and museums, in some artworks, and some unplanned city spaces. The Delirious Museum is nebulous and slippery. It is a parasitical idea found in the fabric of cities, in urban practices and fragments, that is, in space. But you also find it in *narratives*, both in and out of time – in fictional fragments, in historical anecdote and near-forgotten detail (2006: 4).

Storrie’s museum, I would argue, could also be described as the “entangled museum”, where meaning making is made in the in-between, the intra-actions between visitors, objects and the environment.

Elaine Heumann Gurian, on the topic of complexity in museums, alternatively argues for the need for complex museums that recognise the “need to help our citizens expect that real public problems are complex, that solutions are always approximate and unintended consequences can and do arise when least expected. We all need admiration for patience” (2017: [Online]). Gurian furthermore argues that by allowing complexity into museums, these institutions could encourage empathy in their visitors (2017). Gurian’s call for patience and empathy through the negotiation of complexity reminds of Barad’s ethics of relationality, suggesting that the posthuman museum is also a space in which the negotiation of complexity must occur.

Whether virtual, delirious or complex, the proposition of a museological practice based in the philosophical ethics of entanglement is one which I would argue is sustained through the mutual reinforcement of the transformative and political spirit of both sociomuseology and posthumanism. It is with the simultaneous integration of the synaesthetic approach mentioned in 2.4.2., however, that this framework is best applied to making meaning of foodways. If the differences in foodways between self and Other could be diffractively attempted, or entangled, using a synaesthetic approach, culminating in a sociomuseological practice or statement, the political ambition of cross-cultural tolerance and understanding as well as empathy (following Gurian) could possibly be realised.

## 2.5 SYNTHESIS AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In conclusion to this chapter and its proposed theoretical framework, I next outline a synthesis of the consulted literature, in order to aid the reader in visualising the entanglements between the core theories and concepts that inform this study. Following the synthesis I briefly explain the choices made towards the conception of my theoretical framework, supported by a diagrammatical conceptual framework which also takes into account contextual parameters as discussed in the following chapter.

In the diagram that follows (Figure 2.1), I bring together the basic tenets of the theoretical framework adopted in this study. This type of visualisation is especially useful in this instance for its ability to show how the various theories overlap and relate in significant ways. As explored throughout the chapter, the core theories of sensory theory, posthumanism and sociomuseology interact and overlap in a myriad of ways. Within each overlap, I suggest a sub-theory which acts as the primary (although not by any means the only) link between any two of the core theories.

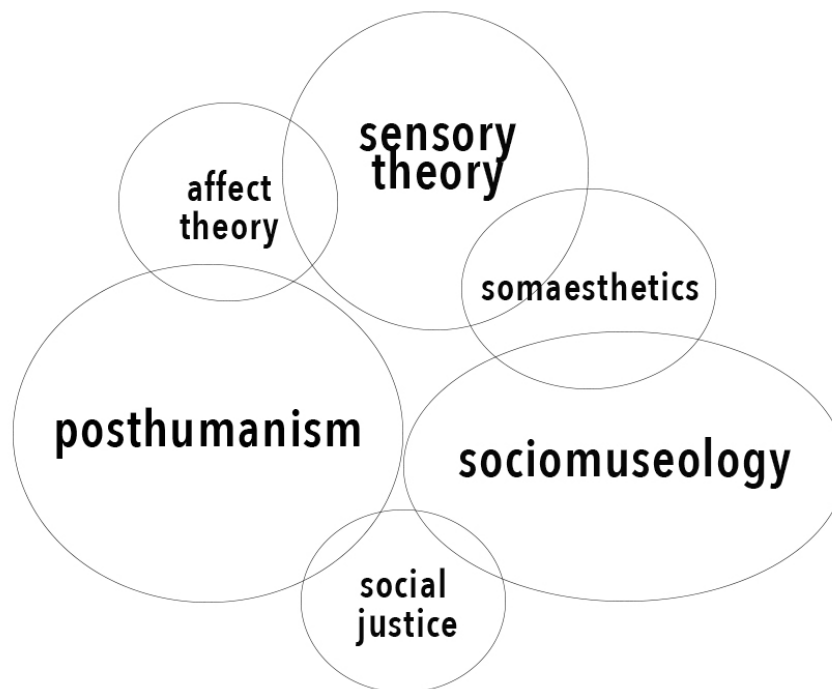


Figure 2.1: Synthesis of core theories related to this study

Figure 2.1 illustrates the organic nature of the relations between these theories, which are more often complementary but also affirmatively differential, as posthumanist thinking would propose. Given that the overarching theme of the theoretical framework is the fluidity and complexity of interplay between theoretical and practical concepts, this synthesis should not be considered exhaustive nor the illustration indicative of its complexity.

To summarise: sensory theory, posthumanism and sociomuseological theory are considered the core theoretical constructs of this framework, supported by the relational reinforcement of affect theory, somaesthetics and social justice, among other concepts. Sensory theory was chosen for its relevance in investigating the role of the senses integratively (or synaesthetically) towards holistic meaning making (Howes 2003). In relation to sociomuseology, sensory theory affirms the body as a socio-political platform through the concept of somaesthetics (Shusterman 1999, 2016), where through eating, the body and its interactions with others could be considered a transformative sociomuseological practice.

Sensory theory in turn primarily relates to posthumanism through the theory of affect, where affect is the bodily manifestation (or synaesthetic sensing) of emotion before it is understood by the mind, and is understood by the body as communal without a shared language to define it. Again, it should be noted that there are several other connecting points between sensory theory and the specific aspects of posthumanism explored in this study, as is made evident in this chapter, but I would identify affect theory as the strongest link between the two. The primary aspect of posthumanism<sup>52</sup> considered in this study is its basis in the belief of transcending humanist binary dualisms through an affirmative approach to difference, which is activated through the concepts of intra-action, entanglement and diffraction (Barad 2007). Social justice is subsequently considered as the strongest relation between the posthumanist ethics of relationality as proposed by Barad and the political objectives of sociomuseology as museological practice.

Sociomuseology, as the third elemental core of the theoretical framework, was chosen for its pragmatic and transformative approach to the practice of museology. Given the participatory nature of the chosen

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<sup>52</sup> As posthumanism comprises a complex and diverse range of theoretical propositions I delineate my interest in this specific aspect to avoid confusion.



methodology towards achieving the identified research aims, sociomuseology is considered theoretically as well as pragmatically relevant and valuable.

Given the above synthesis of the theoretical framework of this study, I constructed a conceptual framework, which visually identifies the initial thinking behind the research process towards answering the research question, to assist the reader in understanding the theoretical framework in relation to the context of the study (see Chapter 3). The conceptual framework (Figure 2.2) is presented as a networked configuration of the various sites of foodways in Kayamandi to be contextualised in the study as contributing to the research aims. The choice of a network for this framework refers to the theoretical emphasis on relationality as described throughout this chapter. This network is organised around a central nodal point, which could form the physical and sensory core from which the sociomuseological practice could further develop, through networked participation between visitors and the other sites of foodways in this network. The choice of a central nodal point of reference is also a pragmatic one, as the study engaged in an action research partnership with a particular site, which posed specific potential for its ability to function as a node within a larger network of foodways in considering a sociomuseological practice. The motivation for this choice of partner is elaborated in Chapter 5. Furthermore, the theoretical emphasis on relationality and intersensoriality should be understood through the connections between the sites as they are vested in the interpersonal and intersensory interactions that form the sociomuseological practice. The broader context is illustrated as connecting the sites within its defined borders.

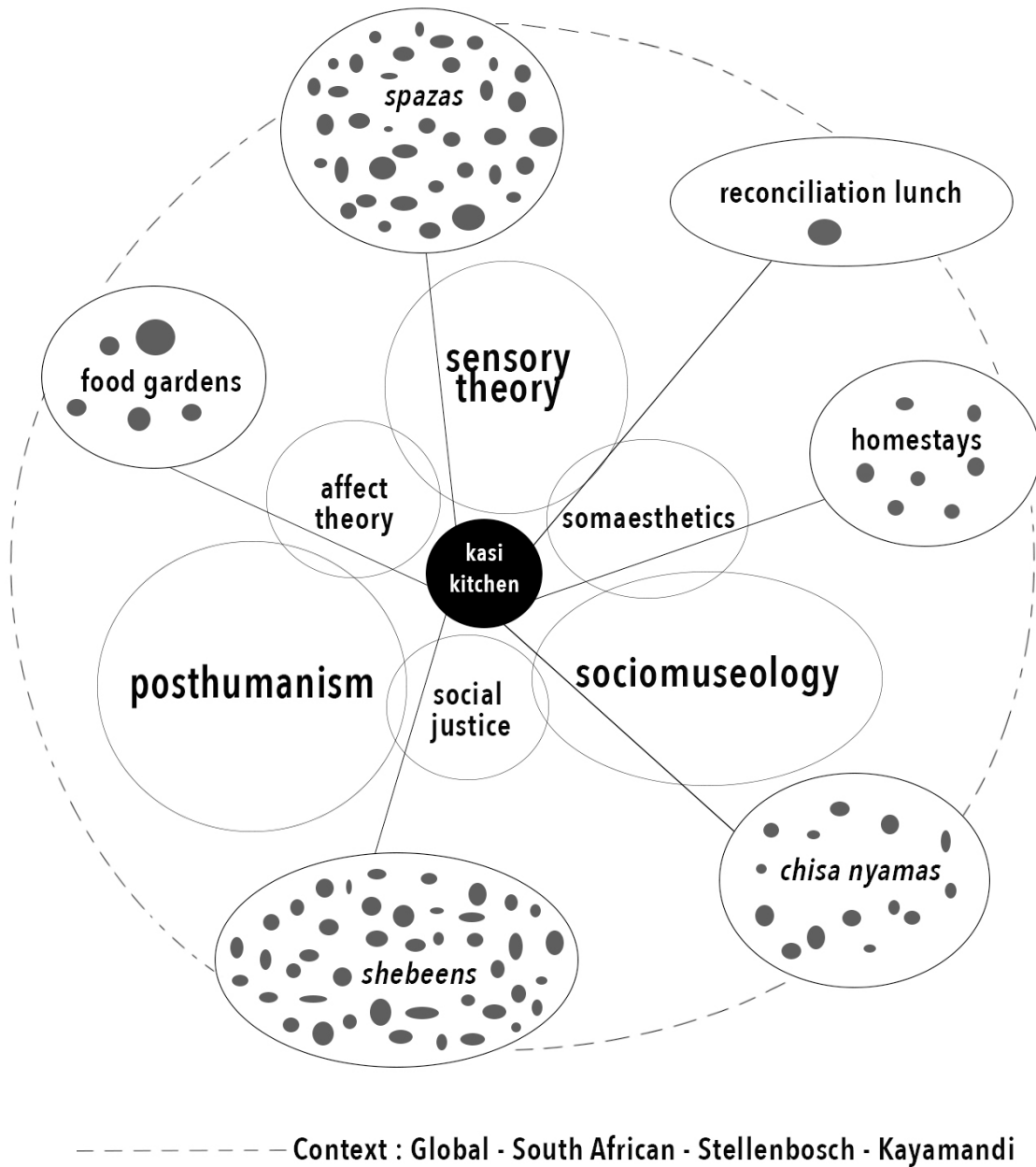


Figure 2.2: Conceptual framework: Core theories as a networked configuration of foodways in Kayamandi

In order to support the interpretation of this conceptual framework, the following chapter addresses the contextual considerations of this study towards achieving the research aims. I first outline the study of foodways and its documentation and communication in the field of museology from a global perspective. I then discuss such museological investigation of foodways within South Africa, also briefly referring to the social, economic and political dimensions of foodways within this particular context given a prevailing perpetuation of social injustice. The contextual considerations of Stellenbosch and subsequently the community of Kayamandi are then unpacked against this background, which will provide the reader with an initial understanding of the network of foodways as illustrated above.



Figure 2.3 – A street scene in Kayamandi

## CHAPTER 3 — THE RESEARCH CONTEXT AND ITS ENTANGLEMENT

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

As discussed in Chapter 4, this research is premised on a participatory inquiry into the foodways of the Kayamandi community, through a diffractive methodology, functioning within an action research study. Given this approach, an exploration of the context in which the research took place is critical. The diffractive methodology concept of Barad, forms a conceptual bridge between the theoretical framework and methodology of this research, and is premised on the following principle:

Each bit of matter, each moment of time, each position in space is a multiplicity, a superposition/entanglement of (seemingly) disparate parts. Not a blending of separate parts or a blurring of boundaries, but in the thick web of its specificities, what is at issue is its unique material historialities and how they come to matter (Barad 2014: 176).

It is these specificities and historialities and their entanglement that emerge in the context of research, in the everyday materialities of foodways as they make meaning for the community of Kayamandi. The broader context through which these meanings emerge is of critical importance as it acts as a frame to better understand such entanglement. Hence the reason for an in-depth consideration of context in this dissertation: to support the theoretical framework developed in the previous chapter, and in order to develop a diffractive understanding of the potential of foodways to be acknowledged through a sociomuseological practice given the particular entanglements between food, people and environment in Kayamandi. In what follows, I first discuss the study of foodways and its intersection with museology on a global scale, also citing pertinent examples of projects where this intersection is attempted. Following is a description of the South African context of foodways studies, as well as that of museum studies, given a specific historical background of cultural and racial oppression and division. I then discuss the Eurocentric historical narrative of Stellenbosch in reference to its foodways, also considering recent attempts to diversify this narrative. Finally, the Kayamandi community is contextualised, with specific attention to its marginalisation in terms of the Stellenbosch geography and the effect that this has on its foodways.

### 3.2 FOODWAYS AND ITS GLOBAL MUSEOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT

Foodways as a subject of academic study is a relatively recent phenomenon, although it touches on a human activity that is arguably one of the most fundamental to our existence. As Cargill argues, “[t]he act of finding food, gathering around the fire, cooking and consuming it, is a profoundly important experience, not just to the body, but to the self” (2014: 42). Besides being an act of self-sustenance, both physically and spiritually, these actions connect us to other bodies and other selves, to make community (ibid.). Foodways can in this way be considered the language through which these actions are understood to have meaning (Long 2014). Although foodways speaks to such a fundamental or basic human activity, the meanings that it generates are vast and complex, which is why many scholars have used the notion of networks to assist in understanding this complexity. Young, Eckstein and Conley describe foodways as the meeting point between history and culture, through “networks of production, distribution, and consumption”, as it “stresses the interconnected nature of what it means to dine, cook, share a table, pop in at a grocery store ... and so on” (2015: 1). Every small food-oriented action is a result of the participation in this network, whether conscious or unaware.

Long argues that the study of foodways “posits an interpretive lens for the multifaceted and multi-vocal nature of food” (2015b: 14). Food, in this sense, is much more than just the “stuff we eat” (Long 2015c: 192). Rather, “foodways emphasizes the systemic nature of food activities as well as the ways in which memories and meanings get attached to food, oftentimes through seemingly trivial activities” (ibid.). Long describes foodways variably as a model, a system, or a network, firstly to demonstrate the interconnectedness of food activities and secondly to point out its adaptability, as “‘meaningfulness’ can be attached to a food anywhere within this framework”; also an “individual can and may insert his or her inventiveness, artistry, or creativity into any part of the system without noticeably changing the final product” (Long 2015b: 14). In other words, the study of foodways is an exercise in attempting to understand the complexity of entanglements between food activities, as it continually makes variable meaning for individuals and communities.

Fabio Parasecoli highlights how a cultural studies approach to foodways can deconstruct (or perhaps diffract, according to Barad) influential political and social constructs that are often hidden in the everyday ordinariness of food:

[T]he ubiquitous nature of the cultural elements relating to food makes their ideological and political relevance almost invisible, buried in the supposedly natural and self-evident fabric of everyday life. Meanwhile, our own flesh becomes fuel for all kinds of cultural battles among different visions of personhood, family, society, polity, and economics (2014: 275).

A cultural studies approach to foodways in this way resonates with a diffractive methodology as it seeks to understand the complexity of the system of foodways through an embrace of differential meanings that are often in conflict.<sup>53</sup> Folklore studies similarly engage with foodways as a system or network of power plays through the diverse activities of individuals and communities in making meaning through food, towards “express[ing] their identities and beliefs as well as construct[ing] relationships and boundaries” (Long 2014: 220-221). Long argues that a “folkloristic perspective enables us to examine how food traditions tie us both inwardly to our own experiences and interpretations and outwardly to the larger world of political, environmental, economic, and social concerns” (ibid.). A folklore approach to foodways thus creates a bridge between the politics of the self and the politics of relationships beyond the self, with Others and the immediate environment, as is also echoed by Parasecoli in outlining a cultural studies approach.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Rick Dolphijn, in discussing foodscapes from a new-materialist perspective, also provides useful insight into the understanding of foodways which resonates with those above (2004). He frames the experience of food (or foodways) as understood by the self in relation to the intersection of the material food itself, the space in which it is experienced, and with whom this experience is had, where this triadic formation informs the territories of foodscapes, and, I would argue, foodways (ibid.). Informed by folklorist- and cultural studies-based, as well as Dolphijn’s new-materialist perspectives on foodways, and its

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<sup>53</sup> “Cultural studies, and the food-related research that gets its inspiration from it, are outlining methods to grapple with the connections, the mechanisms, and even the malfunctions in the extensive, intrusive, and all-encompassing web of meanings, practices, and values that constitute the contemporary food world” (Parasecoli 2014: 278).

understanding as a complex and political system, I next contextualise foodways within museology, also outlining examples that point to a more sociomuseological approach to food.

Foodways as engaged through museology has become of increasing interest to academics, as the diversity in voices discussing the intersection of its territories has grown beyond a traditional understanding of food as simply documented and displayed in the museum (Levent & Mihalache 2017a; Gothie 2015; Mihalache 2016, 2014). Previously, most conventional interpretations of a “food museum” would understand this as “[a] place that collects artifacts and archival materials, in the broadest sense, about food and drink for preservation and displays this material in a way that interprets the story for the public” (Williams 2014: 234). This definition follows the conventional understanding of what a museum is meant to do – preserve, display and interpret. Food objects, however, pose a particular problem to this definition, as these objects are often composed of organic matter and are not meant to be preserved, or simply looked at, but rather consumed. Hence the traditional “food museum” is often defined by the cultural artifacts that support interpretations of food objects, as opposed to allowing for interaction with such organic materials.

In this sense, the notion of food in museums has often been conflated with a material approach to food heritage specifically, which is but one avenue in the greater scheme of food studies. The emphasis on the material object as it represents meaning for cultural communities, nation states or other forms of group identity is key in this approach, within the exhibitionary context of the museum. Food heritage, however, requires a much more complex engagement with food beyond its material representation, in considering that “as a foodstuff travels through a foodway, and an object is transformed into heritage, it is used to indicate, explicate, and replicate important ideological claims on identity, ownership, sovereignty, and value” (Di Giovine & Brulotte 2014: 3). The transformation process from object to meaning, or the travelling of foodstuff through foodway, cannot, however, be accurately represented only through its material capacity, through being seen, but rather requires a sensory interaction that engages all of the senses.<sup>54</sup> This is not only true of food heritage, with which museums are arguably more familiar, but of the greater

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<sup>54</sup> As Timothy and Ron rightly state, “From a heritage perspective, cuisines are a mix of tangible (e.g. ingredients and cooking accoutrements) and intangible (e.g. tastes, smells, recipes, and eating traditions) elements that contribute to the cultural values and characteristics of places” (2013: 99). Their statement lends legitimacy to the argument for a multisensorial engagement with food heritage.



dialogue around foodways and the food system, which involves questions of socio-political and economic injustice and inequality.

Many scholars have contributed convincing arguments to the need for greater sensory diversity in the approach to food and foodways in museums. Constance Classen shows how multisensorial engagement was in fact an indelible part of museum experiences in the early modern period, where interaction with food in the context of the museum collection was welcomed and accepted (2007). She describes the ways in which taste functioned to enhance the experience of early museum collections in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, ranging from the meals that accompanied visits, to the physical ingestion of exotic artifacts on display (Classen 2007). Although these educational practices were deemed “unscientific” from the commencement of the late modern era (Classen 2007: 907), the movement back towards multisensorial museum experiences gained traction in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century (Howes 2014).

Nina Levent and Irina Mihalache, to this end, have recently published a collection of scholarly investigations into the developing dialogue of food (and foodways) in museology (2017a). *Food and Museums* recognises the diversity of perspectives from which its dialogue is emerging – featuring contributions from culinary historians, neuroscientists, artists and chefs. As Levent and Mihalache argue, it is “food’s flexibility to be studied from multiple perspectives – as a subject of politics, as a form of cultural capital, as gender performance, as global traveller, or as a source of social anxiety ... [that] facilitates its diverse uses in museum practice” (2017b: 4). There are many examples in this volume of both experimental projects and best practices where food as a subject of museological attention has triumphed and has challenged conventions. One particular field of interest within this dialogue involves the modalities shared between restaurant and museum.

The restaurant has come to be understood as a specific socio-spatial phenomenon, as much as the museum. Gary Fine in his work on restaurant kitchens recognises that the restaurant is a “social system that demands multiple – and linked – interpretations” (1996: 231). Similarly, Beriss and Sutton argue for an understanding of the restaurant as a postmodern symbol which reveals “deeper social trends” (2007b: 1-3). Restaurants “form a bustling microcosm of social and symbolic processes” geared towards the construction



of identity along sensory lines (2007b: 4). Given the potential of the restaurant to function as a lens to gain deeper understanding of locally specific social structures, its affinity to the museum is striking. As Clintberg writes, “[t]he modern restaurant, where food and other objects are put on display and sold in immersive sensory environments, is in dynamic parallel with the design and operation of the museum” (2017: 204), as each of these spaces uses similar rhetorical strategies with their visitors.

Clintberg, like Mihalache, believes that the museum restaurant provides museum institutions with a unique opportunity to engage visitors, although noting that such engagement is necessarily fraught with the problematics of commodifying “the embodied consumption of culture,” especially in the context of rising cosmopolitanism <sup>55</sup> (Clintberg 2017: 217). Mihalache describes the museum restaurant as an “interdisciplinary space of informal learning, where the menu and the food are multisensorial ‘lessons’ in history and culture” (2016: 319), and visitors are able to “experience the museum content through the food on their plate” (2016: 323). Moreover, she believes that “museum restaurants, if used more intentionally as interpretive spaces, can be laboratories for new methods of interpretation, some more obvious than others” (2016: 324), where a diversity of voices within and outside the museum could make collaborative meaning. Sarah Gothie echoes this view by suggesting that the typical restaurant, outside of the museum context, provides as much pedagogical potential if framed as a “food museum”:

Food representations in museums are often relegated to contextualizing *something else* – be it the serving ware or the furniture ... In a restaurant, [however], *real, edible* food is the focal point; the meals served are ‘artifacts’ that offer a complete sensory experience (Gothie 2015: 399, original emphasis).

Gothie argues that it is the *edibility* of food that troubles the shared educational capacity between restaurants and museums – where restaurants operate on a business model often to the detriment of the edible culture in which it is meant to trade, “[i]n museums, food decays”, and thus plastic replicas of food objects stand in for the authentic ones, and edible foodstuffs are relegated to the museum café or restaurant (2015: 403). She proposes that a merging of these two types of institutions could realise a new

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<sup>55</sup> Clintberg notes the close relation between cosmopolitanism (an expression of “think global, act local”) and “cultural omnivorousness” as defined in Chapter 2 (2017: 205, 216).

sensory, educative space for engaging with foodways, “to spark conversations about the pleasures of the palate, but also about the cultural differences and power dynamics embedded in production, procurement, preparation, and consumption of the food shared at tables past, present, and future” (ibid.). Given the increasingly open definition and creative responses to what constitutes the understanding of “food museum”, as well as the potential of the museum restaurant, as evidenced above, a few illustrative examples of globally-relevant projects are pertinent to this discussion.

The Museum of Food and Drink (MOFAD) in New York in the USA is indicative of a growing interest in a new type of museum that can adequately engage with foodways beyond the food object and its preservation, representation and interpretation. Although only acquiring a physical space in 2015, the seed of what MOFAD could become was already planted ten years earlier. The project envisions “building the world’s first large-scale museum with exhibits you can eat. This global center for learning will feature multiple exhibition galleries, program and workshop space, a garden, café, and more” (MOFAD 2016: [Online]). Although, from a museological perspective, its self-description mirrors the model that many large-scale museums follow, it is its dedication to creating “exhibits you can eat” which makes it unique in the museum landscape. MOFAD’s goals and values are also indicative of a space that seeks to engage with foodways in its socio-economic, cultural and political complexity, moving beyond the notion of a traditional food museum which relies on peripheral artifacts to represent food.

There are also other projects that exhibit a museological tendency towards engaging with the subject of foodways, even if they are not described as museums as such. In some ways, I would propose that these projects could also be interpreted as sociomuseological, as they feature different approaches to what could be broadly termed social justice objectives.

The multiple projects of the Slow Food movement,<sup>56</sup> which aims to educate and mobilise local communities on the principles of a sustainable and just global food system, serve as examples. These activities are driven

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<sup>56</sup> The Slow Food movement is “a global, grassroots organization, formed in 1989” that seeks to challenge the rising tide of globalism and its impact on indigenous and local culinary traditions, towards the mobilisation of informed consumers working in collaboration with producers towards a more sustainable, just and locally relevant food system (Slow Food 2015: [Online]).

by the Slow Food Education Manifesto, which outlines the purpose of these educational projects to celebrate “pleasure”, “slowness”, “diversity” and “cooperation” (Slow Food 2010). The projects, involving “taste education,” are expressed through workshops and tutorials for both adults and children, that focus on “train[ing] their senses to recognize quality food” through interactive sensory exercises supported by video and audio as well as print materials (Slow Food 2015: [Online]). Given the networked nature of Slow Food, these educational projects are implemented according to the local parameters of each community or chapter according to their context, which prompts a diversity of approaches to the same framework. Although the Slow Food movement has gained significant traction globally, its approach to “taste education” has been questioned and critiqued by some as supporting socio-political and economic exclusions given the privileged demographic of a large part of its network (Sassatelli & Daviolio 2010, Hayes-Conroy & Hayes-Conroy 2008). Although I would agree that deeper engagement with the socio-political and economic disruptions and disjunctions in the food system on its part are necessary, Slow Food’s concept of taste education and its locally relevant global expression remains a novel practice that reminds of a sociomuseological approach to foodways.

Following Gothie’s proposal of considering a restaurant as a type of museum, Conflict Kitchen also proves a relevant example. Started as a social practice in 2010 by two artists based at Carnegie Mellon University, Conflict Kitchen developed from the question, “What are people in Pittsburgh not talking about? What are we not talking about in the United States?” (Blaine Segel, Interview, Pittsburgh, 27 October 2015). The answer, at the time, was Iran, a country with which the USA had been in conflict for decades. Conflict Kitchen was established to get the people of Pittsburgh to start talking about conflict in its various forms, and, at its inception, used Iranian cuisine to do so as a relevant and topical starting point. It developed into a long-term fixture in the Pittsburgh food and socio-political landscape, rotating its culinary identity based on the geo-political events in which the USA is conflictually involved:

Conflict Kitchen uses the social relations of food and economic exchange to engage the general public in discussions about countries, cultures, and people that they might know little about outside of the polarizing rhetoric of governmental politics and the narrow lens of media headlines (Conflict Kitchen 2016: [Online]).

Although it has never been identified as a museum site, I would propose that Conflict Kitchen's practice resonates with a sociomuseological approach to foodways, and perhaps embodies the type of space Gothie envisions, as discussed earlier.

Conflict Kitchen, although now without a permanent home,<sup>57</sup> was a restaurant where "we get you with good food ... and then we give you information" (Blaine Segel, Interview, Pittsburgh, 27 October 2015). The edible experience was thus "augmented by events, performances, publications, and discussions that seek to expand the engagement the public has with the culture, politics, and issues at stake within the focus region" (Conflict Kitchen 2016: [Online]). Although a diner could choose the level of interaction with the information presented, there was always an opportunity for engagement, whether reading through the information designed into the food wrappers or attending a film festival hosted by the restaurant. Conflict Kitchen was thus not only a restaurant, but, as outreach and education director Blaine Segel explained, ultimately "a platform for the voices from the countries we work with" (Interview, Pittsburgh, 27 October 2015).

Segel emphasised the importance of remaining reflective of this position as a platform, as he noted that the project was managed by "four white people" (Interview, Pittsburgh, 27 October 2015). Thus the approach and attitude of the research and development undertaken by the group was overwhelmingly participatory and inclusive of the relevant cultural communities, according to the specific iteration. Conflict Kitchen served as an inspiring example to this research project in its functioning as a restaurant platform seeking social justice objectives, and resonating with a sociomuseological practice for the exploration of foodways. Although Pittsburgh's context as a large urban centre in the USA seems vastly different to the reality of a small centre such as Stellenbosch, the fundamental questions asked by Conflict Kitchen can speak to the South African experience of cultural, and specifically, racial division. In the following section I describe the context of foodways and its interactions with museology in South Africa, given this history of racial and cultural division.

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<sup>57</sup> Shortly before the submission of this dissertation, Conflict Kitchen announced the closure of its permanent restaurant location in Pittsburgh. However, it confirmed its dedication to a continued educational practice through public programming and events. The reason for closure was cited as the ceasing of administrative support from Carnegie Mellon University.



Figure 3.1 – Meat ready to be cooked at a *chisa nyama*

### 3.3 FOODWAYS AND MUSEOLOGY IN THE "RAINBOW NATION"

South Africa's history of racial oppression as institutionalised first through colonialism and subsequently the system of apartheid has left deep and divisive impressions on the current landscape. Even though South Africans are now living in what would be termed a postcolonial and post-apartheid era, the legacies of these oppressive systems continue to affect socio-economic, political and cultural conditions. In the context of this research, Otherness and marginalisation, as mentioned in the previous chapter, are important factors to consider given the complexity and affect of power-relationships and their entanglement with all aspects of everyday life, particularly as evidenced in the way that people engage with foodways. As described later in this chapter, the vestige of colonialism in the form of Eurocentrism continues to inform the dominant narrative of foodways in Stellenbosch, bringing into question how these foodways may be decolonised in the current context. Moreover, the post-apartheid era, as situated within the postcolonial context, has brought its own set of complexities to play upon foodways in South Africa. It is perhaps most notably the appropriation of cultural heritage, and the subsequent commodification of food heritage, in an effort to imagine a "Rainbow Nation", that has led to inadequate engagement with foodways in South Africa, particularly from a cultural and museological perspective.

Engagement with the complexity of foodways has been most explicit in the South African context in terms of its socio-economic and political dimensions and less in its cultural dimensions, largely due to prevailing issues of food justice given historical inequality. The field of food justice explores "how racial and economic inequalities manifest in the production, distribution, and consumption of food, and the ways that communities and social movements shape and are shaped by these inequalities" (Alkon 2014: 295). Food justice can thus be considered to focus on the socio-economic dimension of foodways, often against a background of racial inequality. In the South African context, discussions of food justice are primarily conducted through the lens of food security, which is defined as the ability or inability of communities to access nutritional and adequate food resources. Globally, the issue of food security has played an increasingly prominent role in sustainable development dialogue, and is also enshrined in both the Rome Declaration on Food Security and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals as a human right (Crush & Frayne 2010: 8). The affirmation of food security from a human rights perspective has been



influential in discussions of foodways in the (South) African context. Conceição, Levine, Lipton and Warren-Rodríguez argue that “[e]nhancing food availability and entitlements is critical for reinforcing essential human capabilities and, therefore, constitutes a precondition for sustainable human development” (2016: 1). These authors are among the many who believe that sustainable agricultural development is the most effective factor in addressing food access in sub-Saharan Africa; hence food security discussions in this context have most significantly been advanced from this socio-economic and production-driven perspective.

In referring to a posthumanist perspective, however, a more complex and differential discussion of food security necessitates a consideration of influential yet some would say peripheral factors that lie outside of socio-economic conditions, such as cultural traditions. Some authors have recognised the value of considering the cultural aspects of foodways in the dialogue around food security. Molnar suggests that it is important to recognise cultural dimensions of foodways in determining the contextual aspects of food security for particular communities, although such considerations would realistically not significantly be translated into broader-term change<sup>58</sup> (Molnar 1999). Others have alternatively argued that attention to consumption patterns from a cultural perspective is crucial to successful attempts to address food security issues. Even-Zahav, writing on the foodways of the urban informal economy in South Africa, argues that the “[f]ailure in food security literature to account for food preference, choice and social value, at least in South Africa, given its rich cultural heterogeneity, impoverishes both the opportunity to understand and appropriately intervene and improve food insecurity levels” (2016: 42). In Southern Africa, then, the dialogue on foodways has been largely dominated, due to its history of inequality, by voices in food justice and food security, from a socio-economic outlook. These discussions have also been marked by what Pereira and Drimie see as dysfunctional dualisms that create a binary perspective of the food system:

The perceived division between farmers and consumers, urban and rural, subsistence and surplus production, even the natural and social has largely determined the context in which

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<sup>58</sup> “Cultural conditions must be considered in formulation of policies or interventions designed to improve food security, but such designs are particularistic, situational, and, ultimately, local. Certain patterns of value, belief, and attitude inhibit the development and maintenance of institutions and other manifestations of social organization that prevent or reduce food insecurity, but these must be dealt with in each societal and cultural context on its own terms” (Molnar 1999: 496).

governance of the food system takes place. Interventions, whether through policy, programming, activism or research, are usually located within one of these spheres without recognition of the multiplicities and complexities of the broader system (2016: 1).

Pereira and Drimie emphasise that this division in activity towards transformation in the food system is disconnected from “the reality of how people grow, rear, catch, process, buy, prepare and consume their food” (ibid.), realities that are often influenced by cultural traditions. In response to this problematic in the existing research, Pereira and Drimie have developed a conceptual framework “that aims to connect multiple understandings of the food system in order to make positionality more explicit and through this understanding to strengthen decision-making” (ibid.). Through the implementation of this framework in some of the activities of the Southern Africa Food Lab (SAFL), Pereira and Drimie are attempting to widen the scope of food security discussion in South Africa to include the cultural perspectives that are often neglected, and also affirm the complexity of the food system beyond socio-economic dimensions.

The SAFL initiative is one example of a concerted effort to provide a more complex way of understanding the food system through the inclusion of food cultural dimensions in considering its transformation. Food culture or food heritage as a subject of engagement has occupied mostly non-academic discussion in the South African context. Exploration of cultural foodways has to a large extent been embedded within the domain of popular gastronomic attention.

Competitive television-broadcasted “braai”<sup>59</sup> cook-offs and heritage-themed cookbooks have increasingly captivated South African audiences, fuelling a local flowering of foodie culture, in line with global trends. One particular phenomenon which has received much traction as well as criticism in this development is the “National Braai Day” (NBD) campaign. This initiative was established to rally South Africans from all communities to come together across cultures over a braai, on one day of the year, which is the governmentally recognised Heritage Day. Although the aim of the NBD has been to facilitate social cohesion, it has unfortunately also cultivated exclusion. Not only has NBD appropriated a national holiday

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<sup>59</sup> “Braai” is the colloquial term for cooking (meat) on an open fire and is taken from the Afrikaans language. The African-language equivalent (widely used across the various African languages and dialects spoken in South Africa) is *chisa nyama*, although “braai” seems to be more frequently used in popular media.



to celebrate one traditional pastime to the neglect of other cultural expressions, but the overwhelmingly white (and mostly Afrikaans male) identity of the campaign by implication creates an exclusionary atmosphere. Rosabelle Boswell writes on the subject of Heritage Day and argues that the campaign of NBD perhaps oversimplifies the complex nuances that heritage celebration should take on towards achieving a post-apartheid society:

The braai, delicious as it is, is not exactly post-apartheid or un-gendered food. Some might say that it enacts a nostalgic image of (male, settler) farmers gathered around a fire, drinking their home brew and eating homemade sausages in the veld ... Perhaps contemporary, post-apartheid South Africa should not lose itself in the boerewors<sup>60</sup> and the braai (2015: [Online]).

The appointment of Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu as patron of the initiative was a nod towards racial diversity and tolerance, but the white and male face of the campaign speaks much more loudly of its focus and the audience with which it most actively resonates. Although NBD has arguably achieved wider public recognition of what would otherwise be considered just another government-ordained holiday, this recognition (in the form of commodified tradition) allows for a one-dimensional interpretation of heritage to both the detriment of national cultural identity and the complexity of foodways.

The problematics of National Braai Day also begs the question whether museum institutions, sanctioned as custodians of national heritage, would perhaps provide a more suitable platform for public engagement with food heritage to facilitate social justice objectives such as cross-cultural tolerance and understanding. In the South African context, however, museological attention to food has for the most part been relegated to a handful of kitchen displays in a few historical house museums and the often neglected museum cafés that only some of the most notable museums possess. In the museum context, art (and other cultural artifacts) have been the focus of academic debate in reference to nation-building and inclusive/exclusive practice. Paintings of food, colonial silverware, clay drinking vessels – these may all be implicated in museological discussion of heritage, to the exclusion of the larger complexity of foodways which these objects represent.

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<sup>60</sup> “Boerewors” is also used colloquially in South Africa to refer to a specific type of meat sausage, and translates from Afrikaans to “farmers’ sausage”.

More broadly, the arts and heritage field in South Africa, with museums functioning at its centre, has in the post-apartheid context been appropriated by government and civil society alike as the saving grace towards recognising our cultural humanity and same-ness. Meskell argues that for South Africans, “[h]eritage then has come to resemble *muti*, the traditional medicine favored by black South Africans, because both call upon the ancestors in their efforts to heal and transform individuals and society” (2012: 39). Our “shared” cultural heritage has become a political bandage to cover the wounds of racial oppression and division and to bind us together across cultures. The rhetoric of the “Rainbow Nation” has in its insistence on overlooking difference also perhaps driven South African cultural identity, as Ashraf Jamal comments, “towards an increased ennui and sense of fatality” (2005: 4). By ignoring the fact that we are different, we are suppressing what he terms a “cultural agency” which is vital to transformation in the South African cultural context towards a truly post-apartheid society:

[O]ver and above the democratic and pluralistic levelling of cultural differences there remains a cultural agency that surpasses boundaries, as well as their nominal erasure, that can potentially invoke a third space which, in the South African cultural economy has not quite been expressed, let alone sustained (Jamal 2005: 11).

In this sense, museums have acted as the platforms on which the debate of cultural heritage has played itself out, but not as the “third space” which Jamal describes. As decidedly Western constructs, museums in South Africa have had a difficult task in reimagining themselves as institutions in service of all communities. Given that these museums have been associated with representing particularly colonial and Eurocentric perspectives of cultural societies, they have been sidelined as white elephants by a public which asks that a different cultural narrative be told about South Africa. Steven Dubin asserts that these institutions “must overcome a pervasive unawareness of what museums are and what they do, or the feelings of suspicion and alienation that attach to them when people are informed” (2009: 218, original emphasis). Dubin touches on an important point, which is the identity crisis of the South African museum in the post-apartheid context. These museums can no longer rely on their Western roots for validation, but must change according to the needs of the societies to which they are of service:

Traditional rationales such as being repositories of knowledge, treasures, and creative activity do not carry much weight in a society that is under pressure to refashion itself. All

too often, action trumps theory, practical concerns trump symbolic ones. Museums must justify their experience by linking themselves to social agendas that command broad support (Dubin 2009: 227).

Ciraj Rassool and Leslie Witz, among others, have contributed to an on-going dialogue around the reframing of the South African museum, especially within the context of local communities. Rassool writes that the marginalisation of community museums, both in terms of the cultural identities that they often represent, and the institutionalisation of their practice as grassroots sites of mobilisation, has in fact allowed them to rethink the boundaries of both “community” and “museum” (2006). This is especially true in the case of the District Six Museum, which he describes as a best practice example for other similar museums dedicated to preserving the memory of marginalised communities and acting as a platform for dialogue about their sustainable futures (ibid.). Rassool argues that in the South African context, community museums are tasked with a particularly complex challenge of balancing “museumisation” with the socio-political realities of the communities they serve, which often evokes questions of weighing financial against social sustainability (2006).

Leslie Witz similarly discusses the competing interests that South African museums face in light of the post-apartheid emphasis on tourism and transformation, specifically as experienced in the township context (2006). He argues:

Museums in postapartheid South Africa thus appear to be faced with a set of conflicting demands. They are being urged to brand themselves so as to be incorporated into a tourist package that invokes the colonial journey and at the same time are being required to discard colonial histories and reflect new national pasts in their policies, exhibitions, and collections (Witz 2006: 110).

Witz contextualises his discussion through the development of the Lwandle Migrant Labour Museum, the only museum located in a township in the Western Cape (2006: 123). The particular context of the township prompted problematics and questions of legitimacy for the museum in its development, as it was considered irrelevant to the needs of the local community (2006: 126). Moreover, the museum, in attempting to frame itself as a township tourism destination (see 3.5), has evoked incongruous reactions for

visitors and residents alike, as a museum does not “fit” within the narrative of the township due to its “Europeanness” (Witz 2006: 128). Witz rightly states that for South African museums, “the struggle is to ensure that they do not alienate their local communities, and, at the same time, to become part of a tourist economy where the official marketing strategy describes the country’s heritage as one of ‘European influences’ and ‘African tribes’” (2006: 130).

Rassool and Witz both pay homage to and urge museological thinking towards the establishment of what I would term a “sociomuseological practice” in South African museums. It could be argued that in adopting sociomuseological approaches with social justice objectives, museums in South Africa could be better placed to function as relevant sites of cultural importance for a greater diversity of communities, given the permeable, imagined yet politically strategic sense of the term. Moreover, in engaging with subjects that have traditionally escaped museological attention, such as foodways, museums that adopt a sociomuseological practice can also engage in transdisciplinary knowledge creation for the benefit of the communities they serve. Given the delineation of foodways and museology in the South African context, as set within the postcolonial and post-apartheid conditions described, I next discuss the specific complexities that define the context of this study as based in Stellenbosch.



Figure 3.2 – Uncle Samie's Shop in Dorp Street, Stellenbosch

### 3.4 STELLENBOSCH: A CULINARY COLONY

The social, economic, and cultural landscape of Stellenbosch as situated within the South African context is unique in its extremes, yet archetypal of a post-apartheid community struggling to achieve transformation. Inequality has become one of the defining terms of the nation, yet in Stellenbosch it appears magnified, having earned a reputation as one of the most unequal places in the world (Swilling, Sebitosi & Loots 2012: 233). With a third of the town population classified as poor (ibid.), living in the same municipality as some of South Africa's wealthiest citizens, Stellenbosch is faced with a deepening divide between its communities, separated by vastly different socio-economic conditions which are tied to racial and cultural heritage. In spite of these troubles, Stellenbosch has established itself as desirable leisure destination, albeit for those who can afford it, with its historical centre and its European heritage positioned at its forefront. As Grundlingh and Scott argue, the town centre of Stellenbosch can be considered a "'heritage synecdoche' – a small part is made to stand for the whole, with the greater part of town being neither as polished nor as geared towards tourism as its historical core" (2012: 237). Selling Stellenbosch has largely relied on a romantic, Eurocentric narrative, to the neglect of those communities that have been marginalised by the legacies of colonial and apartheid racial oppression. In addition, foodways and food heritage have played an influential role in the construction of this narrative.

The Eurocentric heritage for which Stellenbosch has become known can be traced to its colonial history. It commences with the VOC ("Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie" or "Dutch East India Company") that established Cape Town and soon thereafter Stellenbosch as refreshment posts for Dutch explorers journeying to the Far East (Belasco 2008: 4). The Cape colony relied heavily on imported slave labour from elsewhere in Africa and the East, and even from this juncture the historical narrative of an increasingly diverse community was centered on its Dutch roots. As Giliomee asserts, the written history of Stellenbosch has contributed to creating the illusion that the town belonged to its settler colony, even though it was a diverse settlement where slaves and owners alike contributed to its establishment (Giliomee 2007: xiv). The specific narrative of slavery in the context of Stellenbosch has only in the past decade begun to be told by scholars and writers such as Biscombe (2006), Giliomee (2007), and Viall, James and Gerwel (2011) and the role of the slave and indigenous communities in building Stellenbosch as agricultural centre recognised.

It is arguably the wine industry that has achieved the most fame in the historical narrative of Stellenbosch, yet the deep traces of the non-European communities therein are largely unconsidered. Viall et al. argue that “[t]he story of our wine industry is not only that of gracious wine estates and landed gentry, nor is it just the story of European settlers and fine winemaking. It is also the story of the workers who toiled in the vineyards” and continue to do so today (2011: 11). It is thus also the wine tourism industry, supported by an exponentially growing market coming from abroad, that has played a strategic role in supporting the Eurocentric narrative of Stellenbosch and its heritage. The manor houses and beautiful vineyard vistas of the Winelands, as they are known, make for much better selling points than a poignant narrative of the people who built these houses and picked the grapes under atrocious conditions. It is also important to recognise that wine culture has in a sense become synonymous with food culture in Stellenbosch. Its cultural foodways, specifically, both from a historical as well as a contemporary perspective, is dominated by the story of its wine farms, which is largely Eurocentric. The role of wine farms in the tourist narrative of Stellenbosch warrants a study of its own, thus my focus here remains on the prevailing Eurocentric history of the town as it is most directly manifested in two popular tourist attractions based in its historical core, namely the Stellenbosch Village Museum, and *Oom Samie se Winkel* (Afrikaans for “Uncle Samie’s Shop”). In both of these spaces, the narratives associated with food are explicitly focused on a European, colonial story.

The Stellenbosch Village Museum is a quaint town museum dedicated to “the rich and varied heritage of ‘the colony of Stellenbosch’” (Stellenbosch Village Museum pamphlet). The museum experience consists of four historical houses each outfitted according to a different historic period, to give the visitor a sense of the local domestic life of the Dutch and British colonists as it developed through time. The exhibits are peppered with brief mentions of those populations who were not considered European, such as the slave community and the coloured<sup>61</sup> communities, but these are few and far between. Each house features a kitchen display as well as a dining room, at times with either real or imitation artifacts to provide the visitor

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<sup>61</sup> “Coloured” is a term used in South Africa to denote a person of mixed-race ethnicity. Its use stems from the governmental system of racial classification from pre-apartheid times that continues in administrative use today, and is not considered to be purposefully derogatory. In this context it is used to refer to those persons who self-identify as belonging to a cultural community of mixed-race people distinguished as “coloured”.



with an impression of what a colonial cuisine could have resembled. Notably absent, however, is significant mention of those who were tasked with growing and producing such cuisine: the kitchen maids and farm labourers.

A short walk away, the quaint shop fondly known as “Oom Samie se Winkel” is a nostalgic reference to what was once the village general store, and now uses its colonial-inspired ambiance to function as a modern-day curio shop. In operation since 1904, the shop today offers a medley of smells, tastes, and sights provided by a mix of edible and non-edible tourist knick-knacks. Many of the foodstuffs on display are presented as typically “Cape Dutch” (preserves, jams and biltong, a dried meat snack popular in South Africa) with many sporting their Afrikaans names such as “*slaphakskeentjies*” (pickled onions) or “*korrelkonfyt*” (grape jam). In between this veritable mix of colonial food memories one can also find typically “African” beaded items and crafts made from recycled tin cans. Although the items for sale in Oom Samie se Winkel lean towards a “Rainbow Nation” mixed bag of cultural tokens, it is the ambiance of the space that communicates with a decidedly dusty, colonial voice, amplified by popular Afrikaans radio tunes played on the sound system. In this way, Oom Samie se Winkel echoes the Village Museum in reinforcing the Eurocentric narrative of culinary colonialism in Stellenbosch.

Another institution that has, perhaps unintentionally, set forth this type of culinary colonialism is the “*Fynproewersgilde Stellenbosch*”.<sup>62</sup> In a publication from 1987 aptly entitled *Om die tafel in ou Stellenbosch* (*Around the table in old Stellenbosch*), the group describes itself as a body that aims to preserve and develop a uniquely Stellenbosch food and wine culture (Fynproewersgilde Stellenbosch 1987: 4). A brief passage from the introduction speaks volumes of the ideology of a prevailing Eurocentrism in local food culture considered “authentically” Cape Dutch:

<p>“Op ’n winterse laatmiddag, wanneer die eikebome kaal en die strate nat is, waar kom die skielike hunkering na kaneelgeur en ’n warm kaggelvuur vandaan? Of wat maak dat, wanneer jy skielik in ’n nou straatjie varsgemaalde koffie ruik, jy as’t ware loutwarm</p>	<p>“On a late winter’s afternoon, when the oak trees are bare and the streets wet, where does the sudden yearning for the flavour of cinnamon and a warm hearth come from? Or how does it happen, that when in a narrow lane one suddenly detects the smell of freshly</p>
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<sup>62</sup> Loosely translated as the “Stellenbosch Guild of Fine Diners.”



romerige melktert met goue, uitgepofde skilferdeeg, daarmee saam proe? In hoeveel van ons jong mense se herinneringswêreld kom daar nog sulke nostalgiese oomblikke wanneer hulle hunker na ouma of ma se tafel?" (1987: 7)

ground coffee, the taste of warm, creamy milk tart with golden, crispy puff pastry appears on the tongue? How many of our young people today still recall such nostalgic moments, when they yearn for the table of their mother or grandmother?" (own translation)

The authors succeed in painting a mouth-watering picture of the Cape Dutch table, to the significant exclusion of the serving hands that most likely prepared the delights they describe. Although the contemporary interpretation of the "*Fynproewersgilde*" is less focused on Cape Dutch cuisine and more welcoming of foreign flavours, its membership base, as assessed from its official social media presence, shows an overwhelmingly white and privileged majority. Although this group is no longer the sole voice of food culture in Stellenbosch, its continued support is indicative of a wider trend of local gastronomy as experienced through a variety of food festivals, markets and tourism endeavours. These experiences, in more and less subliminal ways, act to further engrain the Eurocentric narrative of Stellenbosch heritage and support the development of a romantic understanding of foodways that neglects to engage with the problematics of its socio-economic and political dimensions.

An example of a Stellenbosch-based festival that arguably seeks a wider and more engaged approach to cultural foodways by incorporating dialogue on sustainability is the Spier Secret Festival. The Spier Secret Festival, traditionally held on the Spier estate on the periphery of Stellenbosch, attempts to engage with foodways in a relevant way beyond its meaning as culinary arts:

The Spier Secret Festival focuses on sustainability and ethical practices in preparing, supplying and presenting food and is renowned for bringing a crack team of innovators together to discuss not only how to put these principles into practice but to use the decisions we make as consumers of food as political acts (Spier Secret Festival 2016: [Online]).

Although commendable for its venture into sustainability, the festival focuses on "celebrating craftsmanship, artisanal methods, knowledge sharing, co-creation and a creative approach to food and wine making" (ibid.), as the means towards engaging with this dialogue. Although these activities have a rightful place in this dialogue, it is yet an aesthetically focused and arguably surface approach to engaging with

foodways which requires more complex and inter- or transdisciplinary action. Also given the rather expensive price tag of approximately R2 000 to attend the festival,<sup>63</sup> the dialogue which it seeks to generate about the food system is reserved for those who operate in its upper strata, most likely in the business of food retail, marketing, or tourism. In the context of Stellenbosch then, it is evident that the prevailing popular interpretation of foodways is dominated by institutions which in some way or another reinforce a Eurocentric narrative that relies on a nostalgic perspective of heritage, and profit from the commodification of this narrative as it constitutes the business of local gastronomy.

A relevant museological example that engages with a more inclusive narrative of food heritage in the Winelands is, however, indicative of positive transformation. The Solms-Delta Museum van de Caab is an exemplary project, which has sought to engage with the difficult heritage of marginalisation and slavery in the context of the wine industry. Its name refers to the wife of the first farm settler, Ansela van de Caab, who was a freed slave (Solms-Delta 2009: [Online]). The museum seeks to engage with its subject through the personal stories of those who have either lived or worked on the farm, dating back to the Stone Age (ibid.):

The value of the personal voices and human dramas of the people who lived at Delta is that they can be used to create a realistic, complex and sometimes contradictory picture of the past. This allows visitors to the Museum van de Caab to form their own opinions about what happened, to decide how they feel about certain events or agents, and to relate aspects of these stories to their own lives (ibid.).

The museum is one of the few historical sites where the history of the indigenous people of the Cape is explored as preceding the narrative of slavery. This story is enriched by the “Dik Delta Gardens” and “Fyndraai Restaurant” also on the farm, which celebrate the indigenous knowledge of the edible and medicinal value of the local fynbos flora. Foodways, in this specific context, is thus directly linked to the farm’s heritage narrative but also by association to its social justice objectives in engaging with the untold

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<sup>63</sup> This is a considerable amount (at time of writing roughly equating to US\$146 or €138) even for some of those involved in the food industry, such as entrepreneurs or chefs, and much more so for culinary students or hospitality workers, for example.

stories of the communities that were and continue to be responsible for its welfare and sustainability in the wine industry.

Based on these few examples, it is clear that success stories as well as opportunities exist for a broader engagement with foodways in Stellenbosch that moves beyond popular gastronomic taste and a Eurocentric perspective towards a more inclusive and multidimensional dialogue about the food system. Locally based food security initiatives, as discussed earlier, have explored the complexity of the food system much more widely than heritage or cultural institutions. In the context of Stellenbosch, it is clear that discussions on food are had in relative isolation within these distinct realms of popular food culture and more academic interpretations of food justice, and that museological attention is overwhelmingly consigned to a nostalgic and Eurocentric interpretation of cultural foodways. In view of the pervasive divisions between cultural communities in Stellenbosch as discussed, it seems pertinent to consider foodways as a potential facilitating medium, to bridge the conversations between these divergent discussions of foodways, as well as between the culturally diverse participants of these conversations.



Figure 3.3 – A kitchen display at the Stellenbosch Village Museum in Ryneveld Street



Figure 3.4 – A sunny day in Kayamandi

### 3.5 WHAT'S EATING KAYAMANDI?

In the local isiXhosa language, *Kayamandi* translates to “my nice home” or “home sweet home”. For many residents of this township, however, “home” is a relative term. With an estimated population of 40 000 (Ewert 2012: 257), but likely many more due to the variability of informal settlement, Kayamandi is a densely populated community of largely African descent. A large number of its residents originally moved from the Eastern Cape, and many others from elsewhere in the country – and even from elsewhere on the continent – in search of employment and a better life for their families than what a rural existence could provide. Many had to leave their families behind, often straining familial bonds and causing a distancing from indigenous kinship, with only the promise of potential financial stability and a more “modern” life awaiting them in the township. As Mamphela Ramphele writes on the subject of South African townships, “For many, ‘home’ remains the village homestead and they continue to idealise rural life and have dreams of retiring to its peace and quiet” (2002: 154). The disjunction between rural and urban livelihoods experienced by township residents is particularly evident in the study of foodways, as certain practices are easily translated from the traditional context to the “modern”, and others less so. By way of example, *chisa nyamas* (barbecue vendors) are more commonly found in the townships than in the rural Eastern Cape due to higher urban income levels, but rural people use the same method of cooking on an open fire at home. This method is less prevalent in township residences. In another instance, food gardens in the urban context are problematic due to a lack of space, where in the rural context vegetable farming is practised widely. Many of the rich cultural traditions tied to the foodways of the Xhosa people, in particular, have of necessity been adapted or have disappeared in the townships, as the urban livelihood brings new demands and influences to bear on these practices (see Chapter 5).

The rapid growth of Kayamandi has caused enormous stress on its already meagre resources, and many of its residents live without access to electricity, running water or proper sanitation facilities. Given the large percentage of unemployed and poor people in the community, accessing food is a daily struggle for many. Based on a report compiled by the Sustainability Institute, “over 61 faith based and NGO organisations are working to provide in excess of 13 600 meals daily (5.6 per cent of the population) for food insecure



residents of Stellenbosch” (Haysom 2011: 24), of which an arguably large proportion live in Kayamandi.<sup>64</sup> Besides pervasive food insecurity, poverty, and unemployment, not to mention health and literacy issues, high incidences of crime and drug abuse create a perilous environment in which township residents must conduct their everyday lives (Ramphele 2002), and Kayamandi is no exception. In other words, the reality of this marginalised community appears noticeably different to those living three kilometres away in the safe, historical core of Stellenbosch, or those visiting its picturesque streets from abroad. The narrative of Kayamandi, whether historical or contemporary, does not neatly fit into the romantic story of Stellenbosch as told by its museological and heritage institutions, especially in considering foodways. It is a narrative rich in hybridity and incongruity, more often about hunger than satiety.

In fact, the narrative of Kayamandi is one that has remained largely undocumented until fairly recently. The most significant academic contribution to a historical account of the community’s development has been by a foreign student who conducted research for a Master’s thesis in History at Stellenbosch University in 2011. Rock’s (2011) thesis, based on interviews with older Kayamandi residents as well as municipal data, presents a history of Kayamandi as a community formed by the tides of tension between organic human settlement and forceful municipal intervention.

The establishment of a dedicated “black” or African residential area was preceded by the appearance of a black informal settlement dating to 1918 around Adam Tas road, now the main traffic artery serving the industrial zone of Stellenbosch (Rock 2011: 17). Prior to the 1920s, “[t]he majority of the Black population in Stellenbosch was spread out on farms,” but the growth of the informal settlement was indicative of an influx of black labourers to Stellenbosch, causing local industry and farmers to turn to the municipality to create a dedicated residential area for these labourers (Rock 2011: 18). Rock writes that the year 1921 “marked a distinct change in attitude in Stellenbosch about the way in which the Black population should be housed” (ibid.), signalling that racial considerations henceforth became politically significant in urban planning. Following this shift, the construction of accommodation for black labourers began in earnest, and the area of the current Du Toit railway station at the south end of Kayamandi was established as what would become known as the black “location”. The Native (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 (the precursor to the Group Areas Act

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<sup>64</sup> The population of Stellenbosch at the time of the report was estimated at 240 000 (Haysom 2011).

of 1950) was enacted soon after the settlement was founded, which obliged black people to reside in these designated areas, and gave local municipalities the authority to develop such spaces (Rock 2011: 21-22). The Du Toit settlement soon grew beyond its capacity, and in 1941 the municipality designated what is now known as Kayamandi for the sole occupation of the black community (Rock 2011). Set on the other side of the Plankenburg River and the railway line, and close to the growing industrial area, Kayamandi was, according to the local government, perfectly positioned to house, and keep away from the centre, the black population of Stellenbosch.

The year 1941 marked the establishment of what would become a neighbourhood marked by marginalisation, but nonetheless with a resilient sense of community with a rich and diverse cultural heritage, regardless of the socio-economic and political challenges it may face. This story of resilience is one which the recently established Kayamandi Oral History Project seeks to tell, using the Rock thesis as a starting point. Although the project has been challenged by budget and resource issues, it is attempting to contribute, through oral history, the story of Kayamandi as told through its most active residents from all walks of life. Projects such as these are crucial to the construction of a more inclusive narrative of the greater Stellenbosch community, especially as it could challenge Eurocentric bias and also potentially include social justice objectives where this narrative is communicated, such as in the local tourism industry.

Tourism in the context of Kayamandi has slowly developed into a burgeoning entrepreneurial industry, offering many the promise of making positive change not only in their own lives but also in the broader community. Township tourism as a subject has been widely debated and contested, and for this reason I will only briefly mention its contextualisation in South Africa towards understanding the complexity of its role in constructing the narrative of Kayamandi. Township tours can be described from a variety of both positive and negative perspectives with diverse objectives. According to Butler (2010: 16), township tourism has most often been investigated from two academic viewpoints that independently critique this phenomenon for its colonial voyeurism, on the one hand, and its lack of significant contribution to supposed local socio-economic development on the other. Given the argument against its genuine transformation of local community socio-economic welfare, "[t]ownship tourism is [nonetheless] often regarded as a strategy for local economic development in areas where poverty abounds and few alternative



economic development options are foreseeable” (Booyens 2010: 282). In the case of Kayamandi, tourism is more frequently quoted as a viable pathway towards local community development than as an activity that exploits the “sociality that characterizes township street life” (Bremner cited in Butler 2010: 18). More specifically, township tourism in the context of Kayamandi has also in some cases been geared towards reconciliation efforts, in an attempt to draw a wider variety of local communities from Stellenbosch to experience the cultural products offered by the township.

Due to the objective of this research to engage with sociomuseological practice to document foodways with the ambition of seeking cross-cultural dialogue and tolerance, the context of township tourism as heritage practice presented a useful avenue towards entering the Kayamandi community as an academic and outsider. Given the contested nature of township tourism, however, I was aware of the complexity of engaging with this subject in the context of Kayamandi and found the diffractive methodology as discussed at the beginning of this chapter an appropriate way to reflect on (or diffract) the complexity of its realities. While township tours can and must be critiqued on many levels, “they are nevertheless part of a larger postapartheid project of re-imagining and remaking the townships and public discourses about them” (Butler 2010: 26). In the following chapters I discuss the nature of my engagement with township tourism in Kayamandi in further detail, including my partnership with a township restaurant as a starting point towards exploring a sociomuseological practice.

In this chapter I described the context in which this study should be considered – firstly from a global perspective, in investigating the intersection of foodways and museology, and specifically unpacking what is meant by a “food museum”. Secondly I presented the South African context based within postcolonial and post-apartheid conditions, where “foodways” and “heritage” are both messy and complex terms, and rarely meet in significant or transformative ways. I thirdly discussed the context of Stellenbosch as presenting a colonial and Eurocentric narrative of heritage and foodways, specifically in the business of tourism and museums, contrasted with local food justice projects that provide a more academic view of the food system and its transformation. I lastly presented the context of Kayamandi as a marginalised community from its establishment, and explained how township tourism has contributed both positively and negatively to the transformation of its narrative. I also discussed why township tourism proved a relevant

avenue from which to engage with the Kayamandi community given my research aims and objectives. In the following chapter I explain my research methodology in terms of its design, sample selection, data collection, ethics, analysis and validity.



Figure 3.5 – A spaza shop in Kayamandi

## CHAPTER 4 — RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The research question and main aim for this study were formulated as follows:

What would an exploratory documentation of foodways resemble, through a sociomuseological practice, within the context of Kayamandi?

The objectives of this study were to identify the foodways of the Kayamandi community and their experienced meaningfulness; to investigate what these experiences reveal about the immediate and broader context; and to explore a sociomuseological practice which acknowledges these foodways. In the following sections the research approach and design, sample selection and data collection, data capturing and ethics, data analysis and validity are discussed to facilitate an understanding of the methodology of this study.

### 4.2 DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The research approach, research paradigm and research design of the study are discussed in the following sections.

#### 4.2.1 Research approach and research paradigm

The research approach for this study can be considered to stem from three theoretical concepts concerning methodology. At base level, the approach can be considered interpretive. Interpretive research is premised on the understanding that any research comes about from the specific contexts and social conditions of the researcher and participants (Willis 2007). Interpretivism opposes the assumption that there is an objective or universal “reality,” and tasks the researcher with adopting a reflective and personal interpretation of his or her observations; in other words, an interpretive approach “focuses on the complexity of human sense making as the situation emerges” (Klein & Meyers 1999: 69). Criticism has, however, been levelled against this approach for its assumption of the ability of adopting a reflective interpretation of any subject. As Garrick argues, “interpretive studies are philosophically re-interpretive. They re-tell already interpreted experience” (1999: 153). That is to say, whether reflective or not, the researcher necessarily mediates that

which is observed. Given this problematic of interpretation and reflection, a second philosophy of methodology was drawn upon in this study, in the form of the theories of diffraction and entanglement discussed in the theoretical framework. Karen Barad argues as follows:

[A] diffractive methodology is respectful of the entanglement of ideas and other materials in ways that reflexive methodologies are not. In particular, what is needed is a method attuned to the entanglement of the apparatuses of production, one that enables genealogical analyses of how boundaries are produced (Barad 2007: 29-30).

In other words, a diffractive methodology allows for a more nuanced approach to research that arguably builds on interpretivist tradition but achieves a higher level of complexity, “one that troubles dichotomies, including some of the most sedimented and stabilized/stabilizing binaries” (Barad 2014: 168). This diffractive methodological approach specifically recognises new materialism as a driving force. It celebrates the entanglement of material and non-material or social worlds, and attempts to bring about knowledge that seeks to allow for the co-existence or intra-activity of these worlds (also see Tiainen, Kontturi & Hongisto 2015). In this study, it meant recognising foodways (both material and social) and its practitioners as informing each other, but also as entangled with the research process.

Barad’s notion of the agential cut is also relevant to the diffractive methodological approach, in raising an awareness of inclusion and exclusion in the data collection and analysis process amidst researcher-participant-environment entanglement. Barad argues that “intra-actions enact agential cuts, which do not produce absolute separations, but rather cut together apart (one move)” (2014: 168; also see Barad 2007). The agential cut in the context of this research can be described as a process whereby the researcher recognises that his or her intra-action with participants’ social and material worlds produces knowledge and awareness of differences, also by choosing what to include and exclude (cut) within the parameters of research. While these differences or choices conceptually appear as mechanics of separation, the diffractive methodology weaves them together to create a more complex understanding of how these differences mutually constitute each other. In other words, it is an approach that attempts to illuminate the various ways in which the highlights and shadows of data create a complex interplay in the researcher’s construction of a clear view of the object of study. In this case, this optical metaphor needs to be further complicated by the sensory nature of the subject at hand.

Given the study of foodways, which necessitates the crossing of material and social boundaries, acknowledgement of the senses is important in framing the methodology. In this regard, Sarah Pink's notion of sensory ethnography proves useful. Even though this study was not explicitly an ethnographic one, the principle of "emplacement" that Pink evokes through the senses in establishing a sensory ethnographic model was relevant. She specifically describes the ability of sensory ethnography to engage with "research questions that involve focusing on forms of intimacy, sociality and emplacement ..." (Pink 2009: 153). Pink's methodology complements the diffractive methodology as proposed by Barad, as it

... recognises the emplaced ethnographer as her or himself part of a social, sensory and material environment *and* acknowledges the political and ideological agendas and power relations integral to the contexts and circumstances of the ethnographic process (Pink 2009: 23, original emphasis).

With "emplaced," Pink means the immersion of the researcher in the environment constituting the field of investigation, considered the "zone of entanglement" (Ingold cited in Pink 2009: 32). Here Ingold's notion of entanglement echoes that of Barad, but additionally frames this entanglement through the senses. This sensory approach was critical to this study, as I as researcher became immersed in both the material and social world of foodways, to come to an understanding, through the senses, of the complexity of their entanglement, and moreover the potential of foodways to facilitate or prevent cross-cultural tolerance and understanding.

It is thus through an interpretive, diffractive, and sensorial approach that the research design was implemented and data analysed.

#### **4.2.2 Research design**

For the empirical part of this study, action research was adopted as research design. The action research methodology was initiated with a phase of data collection through interviews and photographic and video documentation. The reason for this was the nature of the research aims, which was firstly to document and

investigate foodways in Kayamandi and how they are experienced, and subsequently to explore the possibility of a sociomuseological practice based on these investigations. The action research was continued through an iterative process towards the conceptualisation of a sociomuseological practice, at first in partnership with a township restaurant, and thereafter through a sensory exploration and analysis of the network of foodways in Kayamandi, through consultative interviews with participants.

Action research as a methodology is premised on a foundation of participatory inquiry, and “ultimately focuses on events that are meaningful for stakeholders” (Stringer 2014: 55). With an action research design, such meaningfulness is necessarily determined *with* community stakeholders, rather than *for* them. Reason and Bradbury propose the aim of action research to be creating knowledge that is useful in the lived or “everyday” context of people, which in turn increases the overall and holistic well-being of communities (2001b: 2). The choice of an action research design for this study was thus well placed, given the relevance of the “everyday” to foodways, which was a key focus of this research. Moreover, action research as a methodology within the museum context has been utilised towards including neglected or previously excluded audiences (see Tzibazi 2013) as well as informing organisational change and professional development (see Foreman-Peck & Travers 2013). It is thus a methodology that has proved relevant to making transformations within the museum field. Sociomuseology as a practice also directly aligns with the action research methodology, in the mutual pursuit of enhancing the well-being of its community stakeholders, according to the stated goals of the practice.

Action research in many ways also complements the adopted diffractive methodological approach, as outlined above. Reason and Bradbury argue for the relevance of action research given the participatory worldview that is currently emerging. They consider this worldview to be defined by its participatory focus, in that “our world does not consist of separate things but of relationships which we co-author” (Reason & Bradbury 2001b: 6). In this sense, the action research design follows Karen Barad’s line of thought presented as part of the theoretical framework of this study. It should be noted that although in many ways complementary to her philosophies of entanglement and diffraction, this theory of a participative worldview contrarily holds on to the “humanist” notion of a universal human essence, arguing that we, as humans, participate in this essence but recognise our contextualised embodiment through cultural expressions

(Reason & Bradbury 2001b: 7). Looking beyond this dissimilarity, action research and a diffractive methodology share many conceptual and philosophical arguments, as for example seen in Barad in citing Harraway:

[A] diffractive methodology is a critical practice for making a difference in the world. It is a commitment to understanding which differences matter, how they matter, and for whom. It is a critical practice of engagement, not a distance-learning practice of reflecting from afar (Barad 2007: 90).

Thus, the diffractive methodology approach followed in this study is adequately embodied in the action research design, in the affinity between these two methodological paradigms for “making a difference”. This like-mindedness also extends to the recognition of the importance of researcher reflexivity during the research process. Reason and Bradbury discuss the notion of recognising “a pedagogy of the privileged” in dialogue with Freire’s “pedagogy of the oppressed”,<sup>65</sup> a concept frequently referenced in action research theory to argue for a more democratic approach to research (2001b: 10; also see Greenwood & Levin 2007; Zuber-Skerritt 1996). The “pedagogy of the privileged” challenges action researchers to investigate the power imbalances present in participatory research situations, and seek ways in which to engage with and confront these imbalances (Reason & Bradbury 2001b: 10). This approach was especially relevant in my research context at both a personal and a contextual level. As the researcher, I continuously attempted to engage critically with my privileged background (white, educated, previously advantaged), which was different to those of most of the participants. More importantly, however, this engagement with privilege was significant given the broader context of attempting to seek cross-cultural tolerance and understanding in the space of a marginalised community.

Interviews and visual documentation formed an integral part of the action research conducted in this study. These data collection methods were critical to gaining an in-depth, and specifically sensory, understanding of the context of the Kayamandi community, both as part of the participatory process of action research, and in considering and analysing the networked capacity of foodways. Pink describes the interview process

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<sup>65</sup> “Pedagogy of the oppressed” is a term developed by educator Paulo Freire, and argues for an emancipatory approach to education, where an otherwise oppressive relationship between educator and learner is reimagined through the co-creation of knowledge (Freire 2005 [1970]).

as one of movement, in that “[a]s the researcher and interviewee move through their route, they unavoidably verbalise, engage with and draw together a series of ideas, sensed embodied experiences, emotions, material objects and more” (2009: 86). In this study, an unstructured interview approach was followed, to allow for complete freedom of movement as Pink describes, and to allow the interviewee to lead the conversation to important conclusions without excessive interference. An unstructured approach also allowed interviewees to engage in conversation while immersed in everyday activities such as cooking or eating, resulting in the interview process adopting multisensorial layers. Some of the interviews in this study also occurred while in movement, during informal walking tours of Kayamandi. Lee and Ingold specifically reflect upon the relationship between walking, embodiment, and sociability in the context of fieldwork (2006: 68) and consider walking as a type of methodological engagement in research. Walking connects the researcher to a multi-sensorial, interactive, and social way of experiencing the field (Lee & Ingold 2006: 68-69). Thus walking can be considered an important strategic component of the interview process followed in this study.

Photographs and short videos were documented as part of the interview process, and played a vital role in the sensorial approach to the research methodology. Although images and sound might seem to address only a two-dimensional sensory experience, Pink argues that they work in chorus with the “absent” senses:

[Audiovisual materials] do not *record* touch, taste, smell or emotion in the same way that they record images and sounds. Indeed, in this sense they provide an incomplete record. However, an understanding of the senses as essentially interconnected suggests how (audio)visual images and recordings can evoke, or invite memories of the multisensoriality of the research encounter (2009: 101, original emphasis).

Thus the photographs and videos produced during the interview process did not function only as a means to capture data but also acted as a catalyst for sensory memory “jogs” needed to analyse the data. Similar to the role of walking mentioned above, the audiovisual materials collected during the interview process thus played an important strategic role in the research design.



### 4.3 SAMPLE SELECTION AND DATA COLLECTION

Unstructured individual interviews conducted with seventeen participants, as well as ten group interviews were the main sources of data, accompanied by visual recordings in the form of photographs and short video clips.

Seventeen individuals were asked to participate in unstructured interviews with me, and often included a fellow PhD student. These individuals were selected and interviewed both during the initial phase of exploratory fieldwork conducted for the *RHAS* project as described in Chapter 1, and later on through the action research process as part of the reframing of the sociomuseological practice. Some of the participants were introduced to me through our contact with the Kayamandi Creative District,<sup>66</sup> whereafter a snowball sampling method was followed. Atkinson and Flint describe the snowball sampling method as particularly useful in settings where “chain referral” assists in creating an environment of trust between the researcher and the community, especially in contexts described as “hard to reach” or marginalised (2001). From my initial introduction to Kayamandi residents, I heard about or met other members of the Kayamandi community active in its foodways (whether in catering, as chefs, *spaza* owners or involved in food gardens or feeding schemes) and set up interviews with them over time. These interview participants provided particular insight into specific aspects of foodways in Kayamandi, even if their primary interest or occupation was not food-related. Unstructured interviews were conducted from July 2015 until March 2016, and this sample included seventeen participants: seven female (six black, one white) and ten male (eight black, two white).<sup>67</sup> A summary of the data collection techniques, participants, time and duration is presented in Table 4.1 below.

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<sup>66</sup> The Kayamandi Creative District is a township tourism development initiative based in Kayamandi, which creates a platform for the exhibition and sale of local creative products by using local homes as gallery spaces.

<sup>67</sup> Given the context in which this study was conducted, I differentiate between white and black participants, as well as between male and female. These categories, although binary, do provide contextual information when interpreting what participants revealed and also how they interacted during the interviews.

Group interviews were set up to focus on the collaborative re-interpretation of the model and future of a township restaurant, known in this study as Kasi Kitchen<sup>68</sup>, towards acting as a base from which a sociomuseological practice could function. Participants for the group interviews were invited both from the individual interview participants, and through further snowball sampling within the Kayamandi community. Most of these participants had a background in either catering or preparing food (whether professionally or informally), as either collectively or individually they could potentially form part of the working model of Kasi Kitchen as a functioning restaurant space on the longer term. Besides chefs, caterers and cooks, the group interviews also included as participant the owner of Kasi Kitchen,<sup>69</sup> who had a vested interest in contributing to the discussions and decision-making within the group, as well as the bar manager of Kasi Kitchen at the time, who was a Kayamandi resident and assisted the owner with the day-to-day maintenance of the restaurant space. It is relevant to note that the group interview participants then included, predominantly, black residents of Kayamandi, with the exception of the owner, who is white. It is also relevant to note that in terms of class differences, the socio-economic status of the majority of the black participants was similar, in that most either had part-time or service-oriented jobs that were not necessarily indicative of a stable income. The owner, by contrast, would be considered to form part of a privileged demographic, which was evident from his investment in Kasi Kitchen and the ownership role he played therein.

The individuals who participated in the group interviews were not consistent throughout the action research process. Some group members left and new members joined during the process, due to a variety of personal reasons and complications. Every interview session had to have at least two participants present, in order for the session to be deemed worthwhile. I decided to focus the discussion of findings from this part of the action research process on the first ten group interviews only; however, several informal

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<sup>68</sup> Kasi Kitchen is a pseudonym used to protect the identity of the partner organisation, which may be briefly described as a township restaurant. For a detailed description of Kasi Kitchen and its involvement in the study, see Chapter 5.

<sup>69</sup> Given the importance of racial relations in the findings, as will be discussed, it is relevant to note that the owner has been a white resident of Kayamandi for many years, and is well regarded in the community for his own and his family's contribution to and assistance with several development initiatives, in both a public and a private capacity. Henceforth, he will be identified as the owner of Kasi Kitchen, even though he did form part of the participant group – due to the way in which the action research developed, it is necessary to distinguish his role from those of the other participants.

meetings were subsequently held which informed the findings in a peripheral way. Group interviews were conducted between November 2015 and March 2016, and this sample included a total of twelve participants, although any given interview only featured two to eight participants at a time. This sample group consisted of four female (four black), and eight male (seven black, one white) participants.

Table 4.1 provides an overview of the data collection techniques, participants, timing and duration as was followed in this research design. The coding used in this table is for ease of reference for the reader, and defines the participants who formed a part of each method of data collection, noting overlap in some cases. Coding in this particular study warranted a relatively simple approach due to the small sample size, and firstly identifies participants with a unique number code, for example Participant 1 is referred to as P1, Participant 2 as P2, and so forth. The numbering was approached sequentially as participants were interviewed, although in some cases where participants overlapped between individual and group interviews, the same identification number was used for consistency.

I chose also to indicate the race and gender of each participant following their unique number, with either "B" for black, "W" for white, followed by "F" for female and "M" for male participants. As mentioned earlier, the race and gender are identified for each participant in order to give the reader a transparent understanding of the dynamics of the interviews (between participants as well as with me), as this dynamic was also a determining factor in the development of the study and its results. Furthermore, this dynamic is also relevant to understand in the context of the research aim of conceptualising a sociomuseological practice, where this practice could attempt to facilitate cross-cultural tolerance and understanding. For an elaboration of the coding used in this study, please refer to Appendix A.

**Table 4.1: Data collection techniques, participants, time and duration**

	Technique	Participants	Time/phase	Duration	ID coding
1.	17 Unstructured Interviews	7 female (6 black, 1 white); 10 male (8 black, 2 white)	July 2015 – March 2016	17 sessions of 20 – 120 min on average	P1BM P2BF P3WF P4BF P5BF P6BM P7BM P8WM P9BM P10BF P11BM P12BM P13BM P14BM P15BF P16BF P20WM
2.	10 Group Interviews	4 female (4 black); 8 male (7 black, 1 white) of total 12 participants, all of whom were not necessarily present every time	November 2015 – March 2016	10 sessions of 60 – 120 min on average	P1BM P17BM P18BM P19BF P20WM P21BF P22BM P23BM P24BM P25BF P26BM P27BF

#### 4.4 CAPTURING DATA AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Unstructured interviews were voice-recorded with smartphones, as well as written notes used to supplement recordings. In addition, photographs and short videos were taken with smartphones to supplement some of the interviews. All written notes were scanned and together with all other digital files transferred to the researcher's computer and an external hard drive, as well as copied to a shared Google Drive folder between myself and a fellow PhD student also working on the *RHAS* project. This shared folder

was secured as private and required permissions from either my colleague or myself for access by any other person. The external hard drive was kept as backup in a locked drawer in my office, and I was the only person to have access to this drive and my personal computer during the study.

The first ten group interviews were voice-recorded with a smartphone, and supplemented with written notes. I subsequently transcribed all group interviews, and the recordings and transcriptions were stored on my personal computer and an external hard drive, which were kept secure as described above.

Participants were free to request access to the notes or listen to or view any of the recordings made at any point. Participants could also request reviews or edits of any of their contributions to the interview sessions. All information and recordings pertaining to this study will be erased five years after date of submission of this dissertation.

Unstructured interviews took place either at the participants' home or work environment, or in a public place in Kayamandi. The location was chosen to capture the interviewees in his or her everyday environment with which they were familiar and comfortable, as well as for the purpose of visual recordings to supplement the interviews. Group interviews were held at the Kasi Kitchen venue, as it was important for the group to physically (and sensorially) assess and collaborate in the space, given the objective of the partnership.

All participants were free to withdraw their participation at any time, without any personal repercussions or consequences. All participants were also briefed regarding the research process and were informed that their participation was voluntary. To protect participant identities, I have withheld all names from this dissertation, and all information provided by participants was kept confidential within the bounds of the individual and group interviews.

Upon invitation for individual unstructured interviews, all participants accepted and contributed willingly. Group interviews were less consistent, with some members of the group deciding to withdraw due to personal reasons. Some were either unable to make the commitment to participating in the action research

or had differences with other group members (see Chapter 5 for a discussion). No compensation was offered to participants, although I was mindful of the possibility that some participants may have agreed to be interviewed or joined the group interviews based on imagined expectations that their participation would realise either jobs or income. In the context of Kayamandi especially, expectations for compensation are a common problematic, as participants hope to gain something in exchange for their contribution to the researcher's study. This variable could not be controlled, and I made frequent efforts during interviews to interpret and manage expectations so far as it was possible.

The DESC of the Visual Arts Department at Stellenbosch University granted ethical clearance for this study. All participants signed a consent form (see Appendices B and C) and were briefed regarding their rights and responsibilities as a participant.<sup>70</sup> The DESC did not consider this study to be of sensitive nature; however, participants were given relevant contact details of both the researcher, her supervisor and the Division of Research Development at Stellenbosch University for any queries or concerns should they arise.

## 4.5 DATA ANALYSIS

An inductive approach was utilised to analyse the data collected. Inductive data analysis commences with an interpretation of detailed data sets through coding, for the purpose of creating a comprehensive or big picture view (Cresswell 2012: 238; also see Miller & Deutsch 2009: 151). Cresswell explains that this process of analysis occurs concurrently with data collection in this type of research, as the researcher cycles back and forth between collection and interpretation (2012: 238). This interaction between data analysis and collection is also a defining feature of action research, which is founded on an iterative process of development, with each cycle of analysis leading the process to new understandings toward the achievement of change. This iterative process is called an action research model. In this study, the cyclical model of Zuber-Skerritt (2001) was used. It begins with planning, acting, observing, and reflecting, and is followed by another cycle of revised planning (based on reflections of the previous cycle), acting, observing, reflecting, and so on. While the action research process was taking place, every group and individual

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<sup>70</sup> Two consent forms were used for this study, because some interviews formed part of the *RHAS* project, which includes other PhD researchers. This shared consent form is attached as Appendix C.

interview provided a clearer view of the sociomuseological practice that could activate the observed foodways of the Kayamandi community. Most importantly, the group interviews provided a platform for analysing data collaboratively between researcher and participants, in alignment with action research practice (Stringer 2014: 137), to together come to an understanding of the most relevant resolution from which to conceptualise a sociomuseological practice.

Given the sensory nature of the documentation recorded, it was also useful to consider the role of the senses in data analysis, as multiple senses were involved during the analysis and coding processes. Sarah Pink argues that “the process of analysis is both embedded in the research encounter itself and involves forms of memory work and imagination that link the researcher in the present to moments in the past” (2009: 125). Thus the process of concurrent analysis of the foodways documentations relied on sensory perceptions or memories, both in the present moment while collecting data but also afterward during the coding process. The visual documentations recorded facilitated this sensory “memory work” in a significant way.

Although a process of concurrent data analysis was followed, a final and formal analysis was performed in order to organise the data into relevant themes, according to the inductive approach. After conducting several close readings of the group interview transcripts, along with the individual interview transcripts and visual documentations, I was able to identify a number of codes, which were created in acknowledgement of the theoretical framework and context of the study as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 respectively. Coding was also informed by what Stringer calls the identification of “*key experiences* or transformational moments” that occurred during the action research process (2014: 139, original emphasis). These key experiences in the research process are considered catalytic moments that are crucial to the contextual understanding of the development of the action research process, and in this case, the group dynamic. In this study, these catalytic moments centered on specific sensory experiences, between interviewees (whether individually or as a group), the specific site in which the interviews occurred, and me as researcher. These experiences resulted in three broad themes emerging, which are presented in the discussion in Chapter 5.

It is important to note that the inductive data analysis process of coding does challenge the diffractive methodological philosophy as discussed in 4.2.1. Lisa Mazzei argues that coding in qualitative analysis strips data of its messy entanglement, thus removing some of the complex layers necessary for its holistic understanding, and presenting data according to themes deemed important by the researcher in isolation (2014: 742).<sup>71</sup> In the context of writing a dissertation, however, I have attempted as far as possible to adopt the diffractive methodology as a philosophy or lens, while adhering to the criteria necessary for a dissertation, where certain mechanics such as coding are needed in order to produce a text within the required parameters. In other words, I have endeavoured to make sense of the entanglement of the research process so far as the coding technique allows, with an awareness that some of the complexity of this entanglement is lost through the interpretation that coding requires.

#### 4.6 VALIDITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

Traditionally, qualitative methodologies, and action research specifically, have come under scientific scrutiny when considering the validity and trustworthiness of data (Miller & Deutsch 2009: 153; also see Whitehead & McNiff 2006 Chapter 6). While action research cannot be evaluated in the same way as methodologies of natural science that attempt to validate hypotheses through replicability of studies, Checkland and Holwell explain that action research can demonstrate its “*recoverability*” (1998: 18, original emphasis). Recoverability is the ability for an outsider to recover or understand the research findings through the framework of ideas and thought processes established in advance of an exposition of the research, so that the findings could be interpreted independently from the researcher’s own interpretation (1998: 18). In this study, this recoverability is arguably evidenced in Chapters 2 – 4 of this dissertation, which give an account of the theoretical framework, an in-depth contextual description as well as an account of the methodology used prior to discussing the findings. Of course these accounts were inherently mediated or interpreted by the researcher, but in recognition of the purpose of recoverability, were drafted with a “diffractive” attitude as also required by the approach to the research methodology as described in 4.2.1.

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<sup>71</sup> “Coding as analysis requires that researchers pull back from the data in a move that concerns itself with the macro, produce broad categories and themes that are plucked from the data to disassemble and reassemble the narrative to adhere to these categories” (Mazzei 2014: 742).



Reason and Bradbury alternatively propose a series of “choice-points for action research” that provides a list of potential criteria by which to evaluate the validity of action research studies (2001c), which is a more tangible measure of validity than Checkland and Holwell’s “recoverability”. They do however state that action research should always be considered as “emergent and messy”, and that each individual action research project will emphasise specific criteria above others, depending on the context of the study (2001c: 454). Reason and Bradbury (2001c: 454) state the choice-points as follows:

Is the action research:

- Explicit in developing a praxis of relational-participation?
- Guided by reflexive concern for practical outcomes?
- Inclusive of a plurality of knowing? (Ensuring conceptual-theoretical integrity? Embracing ways of knowing beyond the intellect? Intentionally choosing appropriate research methods?)
- Worthy of the term “significant”?
- Emerging towards a new and enduring infrastructure?

They developed these choice-points following the intersecting questions of quality and validity of inquiry in action research as illustrated in the diagram below (Figure 4.1).

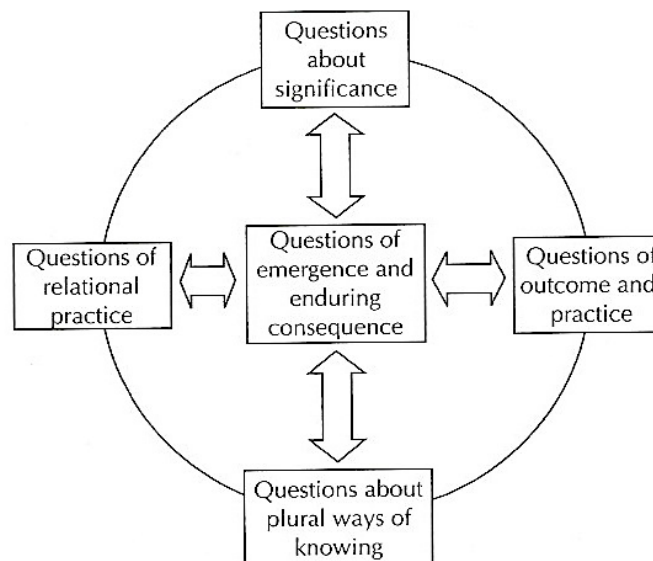


Figure 4.1: Questions for validity and quality in inquiry  
(Reason & Bradbury 2001b: 12)

I briefly discuss every choice-point in relation to this study below, to argue for the validity of the methodology followed.

**Relational praxis:** The interview process followed in this study allowed for maximum participation by relevant members of the Kayamandi community who were knowledgeable about foodways. The use of snowball sampling ensured a wide diversity of participation, which was achieved organically according to the suggestions of participants themselves. In terms of group interviews specifically, both within the first few meetings and at relevant “transformational moments”, the group members changed, and this was recognised as being part of the process towards establishing a core group that could take the township restaurant forward in its possible longer-term sustainability.

**Reflexive-practical outcome:** The research aim of exploring a sociomuseological practice is one which is vested in a practical outcome with the objective of contributing to the well-being of all communities involved in this practice. The initial choice of partnership with an existing township restaurant was also a pragmatic choice, as an existing infrastructure could be used without requiring significant additional resources.

**Plurality of knowing:** Both the sensory and diffractive approaches adopted in the methodology challenged the researcher to consider multiple ways of knowing and doing that emerged through the action research process in collaboration with participants. The realisation and challenge of being *entangled* in the process became an integral part of the learning for me and the participants alike, and a mindful engagement with this entanglement was adopted in the final analysis of the data.

**Significance:** Although difficult to evaluate, the potential significance of this action research lies in its attempt to conceptualise a sociomuseological practice, where this type of practice is vested in contributing to the well-being of local communities. Given the contextual considerations of Kayamandi as outlined and argued in Chapter 3, the aim of this study is considered significant and of importance in its pursuit of a sociomuseological practice.

**Enduring infrastructure:** As with the practical outcome mentioned above, this study was designed in part with the township restaurant due to its potential of providing long-term, physical infrastructure for the support of a sociomuseological practice. Even if the resultant findings indicate a change in conceptualisation of this infrastructure, the original intention was vested in a practice design that would remain alive beyond the life of the study.

In this chapter I have discussed the methodological considerations of this qualitative study. An action research design was chosen, incorporating inductive data analysis while immersed in the process with participants. A final analysis was conducted whereby data was consolidated into codes and themes, taking into account the theoretical framework and contextual discussion of the study. In the following chapter I discuss the findings of this research process and present the data collected.



Figure 4.2 – Inside Kasi Kitchen during the action research partnership

## CHAPTER 5 — FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

Both the theoretical framework and the contextual discussion were developed to frame the findings of the study adequately. The framework was informed by three complementary scholarly fields, namely sensory theory, posthumanist philosophy, and sociomuseology. These theoretical approaches intersect to form a perspective which recognises the relevance of investigating a subject such as foodways synaesthetically, using all of the senses; differentially, recognising the entanglement between material and social relationships; and sociomuseologically, with the ambition to facilitate cross-cultural tolerance and understanding. This theoretical framework was positioned against the contextual considerations, which highlight the global and local possibilities of investigating foodways from a museological perspective, while taking into account the specific postcolonial and post-apartheid conditions of Stellenbosch and Kayamandi within the broader South African experience. Informed by the theoretical and contextual considerations, I planned and conducted an action research study, of which the findings are presented and discussed in what follows in this chapter.

The data of this study was acquired in order to answer the question: What would an exploratory documentation of foodways resemble, through a sociomuseological practice, within the context of Kayamandi? The main objectives of this study were: to identify the foodways of the Kayamandi community and their experienced meaningfulness; to investigate what these experiences reveal about the immediate and broader context; and to explore a sociomuseological practice which acknowledges these foodways.

The presentation of the findings and discussion traces the development of a sociomuseological practice as approached through an action research study. This practice was at first attempted in partnership with one site within the broader network of foodways in Kayamandi. Following the inconclusive result of the activities conducted with this partnership, the data was analysed along with a deeper sensorial investigation into the commensal sites of foodways towards a revision and re-interpretation of the envisioned sociomuseological practice. The network of foodways identified in Kayamandi was further analysed, culminating in the presentation of a revised concept, which frames its sites as a living “museum” through their anticipation as

a rhizomatic entanglement of sensory experiences (following Deleuze and Guattari's definition of the term) that are informed by the complexity of foodways of the Kayamandi community.

The data presented in the following sections is constructed from direct quotes, informed by my interpretation as researcher. Given that my ontological and epistemological reality informed my interpretation of the data and understanding of the context, I aimed to be as transparent as possible in my description thereof, although realising that any description in the research context is necessarily always an interpretation (Garrick 1999). In the research process I was often challenged to confront my own biases and presumptions in an unfamiliar context, as I needed to reflect diffractively upon or interpret the information presented to me, and to think about how my presence and words influenced participants and their own reactions. Moreover, it is important to recognise the role of sensory impressions as experienced in the process of research, following Sarah Pink's concept of sensory ethnography (2009). In the findings and discussion I pause at specific sensory memories that I considered to be transformative in my own case, and reflect upon these memories as examples of sensory experiences that could encourage similar transformations in visitors unfamiliar with the township environment. I consider these experiences transformative as they made a distinct bodily impact in the way that I perceived not only the environment in which I found myself but also subsequently influenced the way that I socially engaged with others therein, towards adopting a more tolerant and empathic approach. More importantly, however, I also attempted to understand the sensory reactions of participants during these transformative moments, in order to ascertain if and how they in turn experienced our sensory exchange as "transformational". These interpretations often revealed contrasting experiences or motivations that are critical to the determination of differential experiences between visitors in a sociomuseological practice of foodways. Given this entanglement between participants, myself, and the research environment, I present the findings, sensitive to the fact that I am using my own lens through which to diffract a view of the foodways of Kayamandi, their meaningfulness, and the experience of attempting to conceive of a sociomuseological practice which seeks cross-cultural tolerance and understanding.

## 5.2 PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The themes chosen for the findings and discussion refer to the entanglement of the environmental, material and social or interpersonal contexts (following Dolphijn 2004) that informed participants' understanding and experience of foodways in Kayamandi. It was striking how much of an impact the interviewees' personal narratives had on both their own and my interpretation of these themes, informed by the overarching sensory impact of myself as researcher being immersed in an unfamiliar environment and open to learning from the participants. Participants frequently related specific personal life events or examples in their own lives, which helped to answer questions that were more abstract or of relevance to the greater context of foodways in the township. Although these narratives were often generally illustrative, they also at times related contrasting stories, to show how a particular phenomenon or tradition is understood differently within a peer group.

Following the progressive development of the action research study, I first present the findings of the partnership with Kasi Kitchen in attempting the exploration of a sociomuseological practice; this is followed by the presentation of the broader foodways network identified through specific sites in Kayamandi, towards a reinterpretation of the sociomuseological concept, as developed through a sensorial analysis informed by interviews. Following the presentation of the data, I will discuss my findings from this iterative process holistically, along the themes entitled: *Translating the modalities and mobilities of foodways in the township*; *The aesthetics and authenticity of "African" food – diffracting the dichotomies of tasting culture*; and *Commensality through Ubuntu – dining with difference*. Through these themes I will unpack the concept and relevant pragmatics of the proposed sociomuseological practice of foodways in Kayamandi, as it shapes what I refer to as the Edible Museum.

I refer the reader to the coding presented in Table 4.1, in order to place quotes in the context of when and under which circumstances the quote was recorded. In some instances I have made minor corrections to quotes, placed in square brackets, where the conversational flow interrupts their understanding in the written context; otherwise they have been left in their original form. I also remind the reader of the contextual considerations presented in Chapter 3, specifically section 3.5, as this background information is necessary to the interpretation of the data, and I will refer to observations made there as necessary.

### 5.2.1 Kasi Kitchen – “If you can’t stand the heat, get out of the kitchen”

Kasi Kitchen was originally conceptualised to create a social space for inter-cultural interaction in the township of Kayamandi. Although it started as a restaurant only, the owner recognised soon after its initial establishment that its concept needed to be “elevated” towards one which is more entertainment-focused (P20WM):

We realised that if you want to really get people from all cultures to come and mix, I’m talking classes, cultures, everything, we had to upgrade certain things. We had to make it easy for people to come ... we had to make it nicer (P20WM).

He also described the pragmatic issues in managing such a space:

It’s also difficult to have a blend, if you have food. Because we pay rent, we pay tax. So if we sell a beer, we have to factor that into our equation. We have books and we have a bookkeeper. The oke [guy] across the road that sells from his house, doesn’t have a bookkeeper and doesn’t pay tax, so he can sell for less. You’ve got to give a person a reason to go have a beer there [at the restaurant], and pay the premium (P20WM).

In speaking with participants involved previously at Kasi Kitchen, I perceived that a tension between catering for local<sup>72</sup> township customers and tourist customers had emerged as the restaurant changed and developed over time towards a township theatre experience. As one participant commented:

[In the] local community there were some classes, they could afford it [Kasi Kitchen]. According to the class I was catering for some of the guys appreciated it, some of the guys were very disappointed with the way [it] went after 2010. Even now, they still talk, there is no other place here. I know people who play golf, black guys, they work for big companies. I’m talking about guys from Parliament; they don’t come to Kayamandi anymore (P1BM).

In this case, he was specifically referring to a change in focus of the restaurant to that of an entertainment destination, in an effort to draw more customers from central Stellenbosch, whether tourists or locals. In response to an awareness of this perception, and the fact that the tourism model did not appear to be fully

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<sup>72</sup> “Local” in this chapter will henceforth refer to Kayamandi residents specifically, unless otherwise stated, as it affirms comments made by participants in referring to the local residents of the community, as meaning “from Kayamandi”.

sustainable, the owner mentioned that he would need to attempt to make Kasi Kitchen “less touristy” (P20WM).

Having noticed the restaurant’s development from afar, and with my own concerns about its sustainability and principles given its contextualisation as a type of township tourism experience, I approached the owner to discuss the possibility of collaborating on a new model for Kasi Kitchen. I realised that the process of reimagining the township restaurant could serve as part of a functional action research endeavour, not only for the benefit of research, but for conceptualising a more sustainable, community-focused manifestation of what Kasi Kitchen had sought to achieve in the past. Given the symbolic and social relevance of the restaurant as noted by Fine (1996) and Beriss and Sutton (2007b), and its affinities to museological space, Kasi Kitchen presented a unique platform to consider a hybrid site which could potentially combine the pedagogical opportunities of both restaurant and museum, perhaps similar to Conflict Kitchen in Pittsburgh. Its contextualisation within the township, and within a frame of township tourism, meant that Kasi Kitchen was uniquely and challengingly positioned in terms of its audience. The tensions experienced between satisfying tourism as well as local community objectives and tastes were one of the most critical issues which had to be dealt with, and it was hoped that the practical and democratic process of action research would be able to address this. Most importantly, however, the commensal opportunities that could surface from the interactions to take place in the space would be decidedly sensory. The sensory experience of foodways, through the interaction between people, with real material foods, could be explored as contributing to, or even hindering, cross-cultural tolerance and understanding. Thus, after discussions with and agreement from the owner, I was able to plan my action research around the development of a new potential model for Kasi Kitchen, based on my research objective of conceptualising a sociomuseological practice which acknowledges the foodways of Kayamandi.

The first group meeting<sup>73</sup> was arranged to discuss the process of rethinking the model, and for participants to meet and get to know each other. Although the owner and I had discussed some initial ideas regarding how the structure of the model could work, it was important for the group to provide their own input and

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<sup>73</sup> I use the term “group meeting” to refer to the instances where the action research participants gathered for group interviews.



ideas at this stage. In presenting the concept of the action research approach to the group, I attempted to place particular emphasis on the fact that the new model would firstly focus on drawing local residents from Kayamandi, and build its audience towards including visitors from outside Kayamandi. The reasoning for this approach came from the perceived need, interpreted from initial interviews, to first establish the restaurant as a local asset for the culturally diverse residents of Kayamandi, thereby also ensuring local uptake, before expanding its reach to include tourist visitors. As one participant revealed in an earlier interview: “[Kasi Kitchen] to me, it’s more like to make a place for the locals. So the locals could attract other people. ‘Cause there’s no point that you bring outsiders, and the locals are not around. The outsiders will feel, ‘Wow, where’s all the people from around here?’” (P1BM). The initial reaction by the group to this suggestion was mixed, with many questions raised regarding its reception in the community.

One participant noted, “I think it’s going to work but it’s going to depend what kinds of items you’re selling here, price-wise. Because if you’re talking about the weekend: beer and meat, they’re good friends. The thing that’s going to sell is meat-ish ... and to bring Kayamandi people, definitely the price is going to be a little bit cheaper” (P18BM). Another response also emphasised the sale of cheap beer and food, “The only thing that will make this place work ... people from Kayamandi they won’t buy those small beers for R20, they want 750 ml beers, and they want to eat as well ... If you’re selling *smileys* and *amagwinya*, people they will come and eat” (P21BF). When asked about concerns or cautions when thinking of targeting the local community, one response was, “We are local, there’s no place like this, people must know they must come and spend - they can’t just sit around and watch people eating” (P1BM). From his comment, I understood the participant to mean that some people may not have the financial ability to eat at the restaurant, but may still want to visit to “watch other people eat”, to participate in the social gathering or the “vibe” without spending any money. This response seemed to indicate the potential local perception of Kasi Kitchen as expensive, and that the barrier to acceptance might take some time to overcome, as this kind of concept was foreign in the local context.

The fact that Kasi Kitchen had been closed for several months previously, also had resulted in the general perception of the space as closed or uninviting. For many in the group this was problematic, as people in the community thus had to be convinced that Kasi Kitchen was re-opening, that there was indeed a “vibe”

worthy of a visit. As one participant noted, “You know a vibey place must start with the locals” (P1BM), and he suggested that a car wash in the street in front of the restaurant would draw the locals in. Another participant noted, “Our people don’t need to see it [the meat], as long as they know there’s *inyama apha* [there is meat here], and there’s beer, they will come” (P17BM). His comment was interesting in comparing the space of Kasi Kitchen to that of the *chisa nyama* vendors down the street, where meat was always visible and was being cooked in full view of customers. I interpreted his comment to imply that the other sensory cues that Kasi Kitchen could provide towards establishing a “vibe” (such as music, the sound of people enjoying themselves, and the smell of meat cooking on a fire) would allow customers to “know” to expect a different type of *chisa nyama* or dining experience.

The second and third meetings focused the group interviews on developing the menu as well as identifying and integrating the target audiences. Some participants with experience in the food industry mentioned that a “fresh” take on traditional Xhosa dishes would ensure that Kasi Kitchen does not compete with Kayamandi street food but at the same time draw local and foreign customers who are interested in something different:

Samp and beans (*umngqusho*), stiff *pap*, *amagwinya*, African salad (*umvubo*)<sup>74</sup>... we want to take those dishes to make it in a nice way. I’m asking myself why you don’t see something like *umngqusho* in a food magazine. Just because there’s no one who take our traditional dish in a serious way ... People from Kayamandi will buy it. Just because I’ll try to make it a little bit different (P18BM).

Others emphasised the need to cater to existing tastes, such as for chicken feet (P24BM), although this suggestion was met with some disagreement as it is considered a low-cost item which would not make much money (P21BF). On the subject of low-cost items, another participant mentioned, “If you’re going to sell *amagwinya* worth R20, the people on the street they’re selling them for 50 cents, for R1, so it’s going to depend on how you cook it” (P18BM), to be able to charge more than the street vendors. One participant proposed an idea to source *smileys* from the street vendors, and work it into a shareable platter (P21BF), thereby supporting, and not competing with, the local vendors while reinterpreting a traditional dish.

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<sup>74</sup> “African salad” or *umvubo* consists of crumbly maize *pap* and sour milk, also known as *amasi*.

Regarding the discussion of target audience, there were varying opinions. Based on the discussion, I perceived that the participants returned to the focus on tourists or people from central Stellenbosch. As one participant noted, "It's not about people from Kayamandi. This place will be only for white people. Ten to fifteen per cent of Kayamandi will come ... The main issue is how to get people from [Stellenbosch] town to come here" (P22BM). Another argued for the need to cater for tourists, based on her observations of the township tourism business in Kayamandi:

What I've noticed, tourists, they stop here every day, there's two or three buses of tourists. They just walk around Kayamandi, they're not coming in here. But you get these traveller's agents, you tell them we are open here. When they are done with their Kayamandi tour, they can come and get some snacks (P21BF).

When asked to consider the potential of drawing local customers, the response was, "Here in Kayamandi, Monday to Thursday ... the business is down. Nobody's buying. The people of Kayamandi like to cook for their houses, there are not 'takeaways people'. But as from Thursday, a little bit of people are coming" (P21BF). Another participant gave his reasoning that "they can't afford to eat out, so they prefer to make their own food" (P1BM). This was also because many residents of Kayamandi live within large family units, making it difficult to eat outside of the home due to the expense (see also 5.2.2.4.).

Given these responses, and in attempting to adhere to the objective of firstly establishing a local clientele, the group decided that the new model would need to focus its operations on weekends, and would need to begin trading quickly to benefit from the upcoming holiday season. The rationale for this suggestion was based on the fact that it was December, when many Kayamandi residents received bonuses or had additional income to spend on food and drink, otherwise "we're missing out on sales" (P22BM). As one participant asked, "Why can't we start now in December? ... I can buy my stock and try to take my risk. But if now we can start without the real menu, let's say from now on every weekend ... because now people are wondering what's what" (P1BM). It was decided that a trial day would assist in determining the viability of some of the concepts and ideas discussed, and that they would benefit from the summery atmosphere, with potential customers lingering in the streets until the late evening hours.

The largest hurdle was cleaning the venue and ensuring all kitchen equipment was functioning. We started with scrubbing the kitchen, which had been neglected for what appeared to be months. The putrid smell of rancid dishes and blocked drains was overwhelming. Opening the oven door revealed blackened and rotten leftovers. Some of the participants were impressed with the fact that I, a white girl, assisted with the cleaning. One participant assumed that I had grown up on a farm, that I was perhaps used to “working alongside ‘darkies’”<sup>75</sup> (P21BF). The process of cleaning the kitchen was, for me, a transformative moment of sensory bonding with the participants in the study, and helped to establish a sense of equal teamwork in the project. I sensed through the interactions taking place between participants that this preparatory work was a good way for the group to feel at ease with each other, as every participant shared equally in the “dirty work”. I hoped that this approach to working democratically would follow through in cooking in the kitchen as well.

The trial day followed after only five days of planning and preparation, and the team sold predominantly barbecued meat and drinks while a big soccer match was screened, with some booming house music providing atmosphere. The large platters of barbecued chicken, sausages and chops appeared to be popular among groups of adults, while the children enjoyed the chicken wings and chips – the cheapest menu option. I observed a few problems with teamwork and communication – at times the music was so loud that the people could not hear one another – but I decided to let the participants reflect on the experience from their own perspective the following day.

After the trial day, the group debriefed and reflected on the largely positive result. Some participants had expected a larger turnout: “Everything was fine, but not what I was expecting. I was expecting more people, that means more sales” (P22BM). When asked what a good attendance number would be, the response was “200 something, or at least 150–200. Then I would say at least we’re getting there. Or 100 upwards. Yesterday I don’t want to lie, we did well, because we didn’t do marketing, it was short notice” (P18BM). Besides what was perceived as few people, there was agreement that the “vibe” was in accordance with what Kasi Kitchen wanted to achieve, and the soccer match helped to attract a young

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<sup>75</sup> “Darkies” is a contentious term with a negative history in referring to black people, but I understand it to have become more commonplace when used amongst black peers in the township.

crowd (P19BM). In terms of improvements, the participants responsible for the bar felt the need to increase the stock variety, because “[i]t’s December, people have bonuses, people change what they drink. You drink Castle, come December you want to drink green stuff – Castle Light”<sup>76</sup> (P22BM). The participants responsible for the kitchen also voiced concern about teamwork during cooking, “For something like that [to work] you need the beautiful teamwork ... it’s our problem, we need to do it together” (P18BM). Another participant noted, “I picked up in the first meeting there are some stubborn people here. I want the kitchen to be my home, to be a family, to understand each other” (P17BM). P18BM summed up by saying, “It’s just a matter of everybody wants to be a boss.” There was also disagreement about the quality and taste of the food, where at least two participants mentioned that “the beef was very very tough” and “our sauce was too hot” (P18BM, P22BM). The owner, upon hearing which cut of beef was chosen (notably one which is popular with the local informal vendors), commented, “Braaied brisket? Are you serious? It’s like eating leather!” (P20WM). There were clear discrepancies between the different tastes of the participants, and suggestions were made to experiment with sauces and cuts of meat before serving them to the public.

The trial day served as a catalytic moment in the partnership, determining the need to systematise the teamwork going forward. In private discussions with some participants, however, it came to light that others were still failing to arrive for service on days following the trial event, and neglected to communicate this with the rest of the group. One participant also drank (alcohol) while working, which upset many others in the group. It became apparent that the systematic approach to the teamwork made little difference, as communication seemed to be poor among members, and family obligations often took precedence over the work to be done. However, I considered this hurdle – albeit frustrating – to be an inescapable consequence of an action research process where participation is voluntary. It became evident that some participants were more dedicated than others, and this made an impact on the group dynamic and subsequent teamwork. At one group meeting, where the group size had diminished to three, one participant declared, “This working together thing is not gonna work. We end up disrespecting each other, you know?” (P18BM).

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<sup>76</sup> In South Africa, the popular branded beers are usually sold in either brown or green glass bottles, with “green” brands frequently considered aspirational or more expensive than “brown” brands.

It was decided at this meeting that the partnership would move forward with a smaller group, who had developed their own plan for winning a local customer base. The group believed that by focusing on the schoolteachers who otherwise were ordering lunch takeaways from fast-food franchises, Kasi Kitchen could quickly establish a local clientele that would also bring catering requests. The new direction required a shift in the menu design, as the focus was now on takeaway food. When asked about potential menu items, the response was, “For *our* people you don’t have to go too traditional” (P17BM, my emphasis), and burgers, wraps and salads were suggested. One participant had already drafted sample menus, in anticipation of moving forward with the concept. It was evident that the participants felt confident with their ideas and were enthusiastic about implementing them.

The new idea and approach, I noted, would have to be discussed with and approved by the owner before moving forward with the plan. I was apprehensive about his response, as well as about contacting the other participants to inform them that the partnership would be moving ahead without their further involvement. One of the remaining participants argued, however, that “[t]his is business. I can say to you my sister, the owner is the boss, we understand that. But you [Elsa] are the boss too. You must not be too kind and too nice. Make the rules, and say #elsasaid. Full stop. Life goes on. Take it or leave it” (P22BM). The fact that the group considered me a “boss” I found not only problematic but awkward, as they were looking to me to provide not only guidance but permission for decisions that were beyond my mandate, and had to be diverted to the owner. Although never mentioned explicitly by any of the participants, I felt that my whiteness contributed to the perception of my role as a “boss”. I subsequently attempted through our conversations to emphasise that I was their peer, and my role was to facilitate the process between them and the owner; however, this message was difficult to get across given the development of the project thus far as I continued to mediate discussions between them.

In discussing further strategic ideas in a subsequent meeting, the conversation again steered towards target audiences and the need to understand the diverse groups that could form the future customer base of Kasi Kitchen. The distinction between cultural and racial communities surfaced when it came to discussion of menu preferences. One participant said, “When we make food, I believe that, when it is black people, I’m

sorry guys I must be honest, we know what we eat, if it's '*boere maak 'n plan*,'<sup>77</sup> it's different food that they want. If it's English, then it's different" (P17BM). Another participant confirmed, that "[i]f you come from Cape Town or Stellenbosch town, and say 'I want to go to Kayamandi', you want to eat something that is not in town" (P22BM). Another participant added, "[so] that's why we need to create a traditional menu" (P18BM). Thus it was clear that the group felt that different menus would need to be developed to cater to different audiences, as opposed to attempting to conceptualise one menu that could satisfy a diversity of tastes. For example, the menu the group suggested for customers from Kayamandi included dishes that were typically associated with "Western" or "modern" food, such as beef burgers, chips, wraps, and roast chicken.

This differed from the types of dishes that were thought to appeal to tastes from outside of Kayamandi, which included "fusion" items that packaged traditional "African" tastes into cosmopolitan dishes. Somp "paella" bites referred to an "African" interpretation of Spanish paella converted into a bite-sized portion. Paella is typically made with rice and usually includes a mix of seafood and chicken, but in this case was made with samp instead of rice, and a mix of sausage and cooked sheep's head meat. *Pap* "arancini" referred to the Italian deep-fried risotto balls, in this case substituting risotto rice with cooked *pap* and corn kernels. Gourmet "*boerie* rolls" were a reference to the typical South African boerewors hotdogs, and the inclusion of local *chakalaka* was considered to render these hotdogs "gourmet" as well as "authentic".

I also noticed that the more the discussions ventured into the aspects of the restaurant business that needed to be formalised, such as menu design and teamwork, the more frequently tensions started to emerge that supported racial and class distinction or difference. This tendency grew significantly when the group proposed the abovementioned ideas to the white owner, who had been absent during the past few meetings, and wanted to start implementing operational planning immediately. New equipment had to be purchased, and some appliances fixed. The manual accounting system had to be replaced with a professional, computerised programme. Beyond all of these tangible, operational requirements, decisions also had to be made regarding the financial structure of the space. The group, now downsized to two participants (besides the owner), had to decide how their own partnership structure were to function in leasing the kitchen from the business, as well as how profits would be distributed, and whether they needed

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<sup>77</sup> I understood the participant to be referring here to white, Afrikaans-speaking people.

start-up capital. The formalisation of Kasi Kitchen quickly became the dominant concern. This tendency towards formalisation translated into a lack of engagement with the sensory aspects of developing the new restaurant model. Due to the urgency of attending to the operational issues, experimenting with recipes and considering the sensory environment of the restaurant space itself were neglected until the operational requirements had been met. There was no time to discuss these sensory issues, for example, by having a meal together as group, and meetings devolved into clinical discussions of Rands and cents, and debating the value of one piece of kitchen equipment over another.

Where discussions had previously been conducted as a peer-group, the dynamic had also now shifted to the owner leading the distribution and delegation of duties, often with little regard for democratic decision-making. Having previously acted as facilitator, I was now responsible for devising the communications and design strategy for Kasi Kitchen. Some participants had to take on managerial duties, unrelated to their experience in the kitchen. I knew this shift in dynamic, however disruptive to the sociomuseological (and sensory) process, was necessary for the restaurant to become operational within the timeframes expected. I had not anticipated, however, that the dynamic would develop to be increasingly hierarchical, with the black participants becoming less influential in decision-making. In some ways, these participants and I were beginning to feel like “employees” in the business, even though this was perhaps not the owner’s intention. I perceived my role to have developed overwhelmingly to being the mediator between the owner and participants, as they often relied on me to diffuse tensions among them where disagreements arose, by attempting to explain and interpret viewpoints from across an unspoken cultural and class barrier. I frequently met privately with the two remaining participants, attempting to reassure them that the process needed to address these difficult negotiations before we could focus our attention on its social purpose. Admittedly, I was also trying to convince myself that this was indeed the case, and that the tensions experienced were only temporary.

More discouragingly, the participants were increasingly voicing their concern for what they viewed as prejudiced behaviour by the owner, as they felt their opinions and experience were being discounted because they were black. This concern stemmed from the fact that the owner often questioned their credentials and proposals and critiqued their choices in the kitchen, which reflected differences in taste



preferences. The owner often regarded the meat as being “too tough” or not of good enough “quality”, and specific choices in cuts of meat and sausage were criticised as “bad” or “inauthentic” (in the case of boerewors) (P20WM). The owner also often relied on external advisors to confirm or comment on the plans as proposed by the team. Due diligence, in this case, was interpreted by the two black participants as hurtful discrimination, which appeared to cause discomfort and tension between them and the owner.

At one point, the owner called a meeting between participants and investors in Kasi Kitchen to discuss the developing financial model. This meeting further entrenched the growing hierarchical group dynamic, as the majority of the investors were white, with the exception of one black Kayamandi representative, and all of them of a socio-economic status that could be described as privileged.<sup>78</sup> Based on the quiet reactions of the two participants to the investors’ suggestions and objections, I realised that the partnership had reached a point where the racial complexity and institutional formalisation were outweighing the original objectives. With the added voice of the investors in the group, although important, the participants felt their opinions were being neglected. Their silence, I thought, spoke volumes.

It would be relevant to pause here and note that these findings are directly based upon my own interpretation and sensory experience of the situation. I am aware that certain sensory responses could, in the context of a meeting between individuals of different cultural backgrounds, mean different things. It would be remiss of me not to note that silence or a hesitation to speak may have a different meaning to the black participants than to me, or even to the investors or the owner. That said, it was difficult to always interpret and attempt to “translate” the sensory interactions and the experience of judgment or discrimination that surfaced in this process, without understanding the experience as felt by the participants themselves. I could thus only rely on my own experience of bodily affect, and interpret the interactions between the various participants in the meeting based on my “feeling” or “sensing” of what I can best describe as tension.

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<sup>78</sup> For the sake of clarity, I must explain that the investors were not included in the group interviews and thus do not form a part of the participant group. Their inclusion in the data is relevant, however, for the impact that this particular interaction had on the group dynamic in the action research.

At this point, the race- and class-based group dynamics that emerged in an attempt to formalise and commercialise the restaurant were recognised as a critical inhibiting factor to the establishment of an Edible Museum at Kasi Kitchen. The restaurant alone would not be able to form the base of a sociomuseological practice as initially proposed.

Following this realisation, I asked the remaining participants in the partnership to reflect on their experience of the past few months. One participant explained his feelings through an apt sensory metaphor. He commented that when you put a pot of samp (*umngqusho*) on the stove to cook, the heat builds up slowly. Once boiling, the samp often “jumps out of the pot” and the hot water “spits” as the samp starts to cook. After a few minutes, however, the cooking becomes soft and slow, until the samp is tender (P18BM). His description illustrated a sensory interpretation of the tense and volatile experience that he felt in participating in the partnership and of the racial and class dynamics that played out through its course. He recognised that in situations where such dynamics become problematic or painful, time was necessary to allow such tensions to reach a point of conclusion, with the hope that the result will be “tender”. Where I interpreted the experience as negative or unresolved due to the tense social encounters experienced, he expressed an understanding of the discomfort he *felt* by comparing it to the sensory, bodily act of cooking samp, with the vision that volatile experiences are often necessary towards achieving desired results. In reflecting on his metaphor, I returned to my initial interviews and documentations and began a process of revisiting the foodways of Kayamandi to deepen my sensory understandings thereof towards a re-interpretation of the proposed sociomuseological concept.



Figure 5.1 – Pouring *umqombothi*

### **5.2.2 Towards a revised sociomuseological practice of commensality in Kayamandi**

I reflected on the initial field data of the interviews and visual documentations in conjunction with the data acquired through the partnership with Kasi Kitchen. The data from these processes pointed to a need for a deeper, sensorially informed re-visitation and analysis of the foodways that I had thus far encountered. It was clear that a partnership with or focus on one site of foodways on its own, for example Kasi Kitchen, was not conducive to the realisation of a sociomuseological engagement with the complexity of foodways, which in this context rather lends itself to a rhizomatic networking. The sensory memories that punctuated these processes highlighted particular learnings which informed my refined analysis of the experience of foodways and how they could collectively inform the conception of an alternative sociomuseological practice.

In this section, I present the findings of my observations and interviews surrounding the foodways identified as meaningful to facilitating commensal encounters in Kayamandi. Specific sites were selected as they revealed how foodways are experienced in the socio-economic, cultural and political landscape of Kayamandi, and most significantly in the way that they already do or potentially could invite commensal participation across cultural boundaries. Although this discussion does not include absolutely all foodways that exist in Kayamandi, those excluded were not considered deeply relevant to the commensal focus of this study – the capacity to encourage sensory and cross-cultural experiences through the everyday interaction with food and drink was a critical consideration for inclusion herein. I introduce each site of foodways with a brief definition, to provide context, thereafter presenting the evidence as it relates to the spatial (or environmental), material and social entanglement of foodways.



Figure 5.2 – A typical *spaza* shop



### 5.2.2.1 Spaza shops

Spaza shops are the informal convenience shops located throughout a township, also sometimes referred to as “tuck shops” (Ligthelm 2005). To an outsider, Kayamandi appears to have one on almost every street corner. These shops are sometimes distinguished by a Coca-Cola branded sign, or otherwise are recognised only by a small window from which the *spaza* owner sells everyday grocery and convenience items ranging from perishable to non-perishable food items, basic toiletries, and cell phone airtime. *Spaza* shops appear to be one of the most frequented access or distribution sites of food in the township, and thus function as key connecting points between private and public consumption of food, within the greater network of foodways. *Spazas* in their popularity and prevalence, thus, can be anticipated as forming part of the skeleton of this network.

Given the observation that there are quite a number of *spaza* shops in Kayamandi, I was curious about the figure, to which one *spaza* owner responded, “I don’t know but [I think there are] more than forty or fifty” (P6BM). This owner also commented that his location made a difference to the regularity and number of his customers, as “[l]ots of customers use this road” (P6BM). Being situated on a main thoroughfare connecting the taxi rank and the largest high school in Kayamandi, his *spaza* shop occupies an enviable location. The neighbourhood is densely populated, and is known as the “Flats”, due to the prevalence of subsidised apartments built there. Throughout our interview, several customers interrupted our conversation to buy airtime, chewing gum or a soft drink. Here, transactions happen quickly – the *spaza* owner knows exactly where each item sits within his dimly-lit shop – a quick reach of the hand, the jingle of pocket change, and on to the next customer.

The *spaza* shops themselves range in size, although in almost all cases the owner also lives in the same space, whether the construction is made from a re-purposed shipping container or takes the form of a corrugated iron shack or brick house.<sup>79</sup> P7BM noted that he started his shop with only R800, having already owned the shop space which consists of an old container, where he also lives. He advised that in order to

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<sup>79</sup> According to a study conducted by A.A. Ligthelm, *spaza* shops are by definition residentially based (2005: 205).

run a successful *spaza* business, one needs to be frugal: “You just have to tell yourself that the only money you’ve got is 50 cents and R2, the other money you save, the notes, in order to grow the business. It’s hard” (P7BM). The *spaza* market thrives from a high turnover of basic, convenience items, with the *spaza* owners interviewed noting sliced bread, as well as cell phone airtime and cool drinks as the biggest sellers.<sup>80</sup> Due to the high turnover of bread, local suppliers have developed thriving businesses to supply *spaza* shops, although some rely on factory deliveries. P7BM noted that he prefers the factory deliveries, as they take back any old bread and replace them with fresh loaves. P7BM explained that he started his business by only selling apples, bananas and chips, which he bought at the taxi rank in Stellenbosch, and sold at a R1 premium. These items, as well as sweets, are very popular with children, considered to be the biggest customer group for the *spazas*. Children are often sent by families to the *spazas* to purchase bread; they can then use the loose change for sweets or chips.

The design of the *spaza* businesses was observed to be quite compact, as only the owner needs to move around in the interior space, picking out the requested item from the shelves inside, and handing them to the customer through a small window, which is often fitted with burglar bars. One *spaza* owner also installed a small step for children to be able to reach the window. I learned that not all *spazas* have always been designed in this way. Since the wave of xenophobic attacks that took place in 2008 in many townships across South Africa, *spaza* shops have changed their design, as many *spaza* owners in the country are of foreign origin. Known as *amakwerekwere*,<sup>81</sup> foreign Africans have increasingly become the victims of violence and coercion in the townships. According to Harris (2002), xenophobia in South Africa has become associated with a type of pathology or sickness; however, it is in fact an expression of a culture of violence that is embedded in the fabric of the “new” South Africa as it continues to struggle towards true democracy. Although frequently considered a social abnormality, xenophobia has become a common and violent expression of intolerance as political frustrations in the townships continue to grow (Harris 2002). Moreover, some scholars believe that the current tendency towards xenophobic practices in South Africa is

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<sup>80</sup> Ligthelm’s national study of *spaza* shops confirms these items as well as cigarettes, paraffin and maize meal to be amongst the most popular (2005: 208).

<sup>81</sup> *Amakwerekwere* is considered a derogatory term by some (Harris 2002); however, it is used widely in the townships when referring to foreign Africans. The name derives from a phonetic interpretation of foreign African languages unfamiliar to those speaking local South African languages.

directly attributable to the way in which citizenship is politicised in reaction to the violence experienced under apartheid rule (Neocosmos 2006; Harris 2002). That said, the change in design of *spaza* shops is one pertinent example of the way in which the violence of intolerance has manifested itself in the everyday interactions of life in the township. Before the emergence of widespread xenophobic attacks, customers would often be able to enter the *spazas* and pick out their items before paying, as in a supermarket. Due to the high incidences of looting during 2008, and again in 2015, however, *spaza* owners adapted their spaces to protect themselves and their shops by installing window counters and burglar bars. I asked one *spaza* owner if he has had any safety issues since 2008, to which he responded, “Since then, I didn’t see someone to come to rob me. But some others did get [robbed]” (P6BM).

In terms of *spaza* shop ownership, the vast majority in Kayamandi is of Somali origin. P17BM claimed that not more than five *spaza* shops are owned by South Africans in Kayamandi. In spite of an increase in xenophobic attacks since 2008, it appears that the Somali *spaza* owners continue to operate in relative peace in Kayamandi. In conversations with local residents and *spaza* owners, it became apparent that residents choose their regular *spaza* shop based on the relationship built with the owner: “It’s about personality ... You don’t check the prices, as long as the personality is nice” (P17BM). A *spaza* owner also commented that his neighbours are some of his best customers, as he has come to know them over time, and also trusts them enough to provide credit accounts (P6BM).<sup>82</sup> He explained, “How can we understand each other? You see, if they [are] paying nicely we give credit. Say like *mahala*.<sup>83</sup> It’s like that” (P6BM). He remembers every customer’s credit standing. For this *spaza* owner, growing the business is not a priority, as he prefers to stay in one location, where he knows his customers: “If you stay [in] only one place, you get a lot of friendships” (P6BM).

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<sup>82</sup> Ligthelm similarly found that “[t]he three most important advantages of *spazas*, as perceived by their owners, are that they are close to or within walking distance of customers’ homes (51,8 per cent), that they offer friendly and good service (40,0 per cent) and they are open for long hours or at all times. Another important service, mentioned by 20,9 per cent of respondents, is the extension of credit” (2005: 210).

<sup>83</sup> *Mahala* is South African informal slang for “free of charge”. The Oxford Living Dictionaries identifies the origin of the word as deriving from Nguni and Sotho linguistic heritage (<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/mahala>). However, not much else is known about the origin of the term and how it came about.



Initially, I felt apprehensive about approaching a *spaza* shop on my own, not only because the physical structure creates a barrier for interaction, but because of what I assumed to be a pervasive feeling of alienation experienced by foreign *spaza* owners and a potential unwillingness to engage. I also found the *spaza* shop design sensorially uninviting, like a dark hole in the wall, not at all like entering a conventional supermarket or shop with bright fluorescent lights. Reflecting on this sensory alienation, I noted its impact on establishing trust between customer and *spaza* owner. Behind the burglar bars and within a dark and cramped space, the customer must trust the *spaza* owner to choose a food item which is of the quality and type that he or she wants, as the customer is unable to access or even see the item itself. The mediation of the *spaza* owner in this sensory experience is thus crucial. The establishment of trust in the relationship between the *spaza* owner and the customer is therefore a critical link in the practical functioning of this foodway, as it crosses a sensorial border between the dark space of the shop and the open street outside, and connects two individuals who are likely of diverse cultural backgrounds. Once I was introduced to the Somali *spaza* shop owner I interviewed, I perceived him as quite willing to share his experiences, and across the burglar-barred counter we interacted, an *amakwerekwere* and an *umlungu*,<sup>84</sup> both foreign in different ways to Kayamandi. Overcoming a feeling of alienation, both sensory and social, in this case, was critical not only to informing my understanding of the meaningfulness of the *spaza* shop in the context of foodways in Kayamandi, but I would propose also to the willingness of the *spaza* shop owner to engage with me.

*Spaza* shops, in both their pervasive geographic spread as well as their implication in the contemporary challenges of xenophobia in South Africa, thus form an important localised foundation of a sociomuseologically framed foodways network which seeks to address issues of cross-cultural interaction and tolerance. Although visitors from outside Kayamandi do not interact much with these sites as they provide everyday grocery services to the community, the cross-cultural interactions which take place between culturally diverse local residents and *spaza* owners form a critical part of the interactions which shape the proposed sociomuseological practice. I propose that there lies great benefit in visitors foreign to the *spaza* shop system (such as tourists or local Stellenbosch residents) to engage with these sites, as it

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<sup>84</sup> *Umlungu* is a common term used by black South Africans when referring to white people – although it used to have a derogatory connotation, its contemporary use appears to have become more factual than accusatory.

could encourage an overcoming of alienation on both sides of the interaction, towards a more tolerant understanding of the most prevalent form of food access in the township.



Figure 5.3 – A food garden at a non-profit organisation in Kayamandi

### 5.2.2.2 Food gardens

Food gardens exist in various forms in Kayamandi – from backyard gardens with one or two vegetable plants, to larger scale gardens managed or supported by non-profit or faith-based organisations. Walking around Kayamandi and often entering the well-kept yards of some interviewees, I noticed a handful of bright green spinach leaves here, perhaps a few shiny red tomatoes there, sometimes with a chicken pecking at the dirt in between. I became aware that gardening was a skill that many people in Kayamandi, especially older women, possessed, although with little resources to practise it. Land ownership is a common obstacle to successful subsistence food production in Kayamandi, as residents frequently either only own or rent a small shack or a house, with limited surrounding land that could be used for gardening. As noted by one participant, the clay-based soil found in Kayamandi is also not the best quality for growing vegetables and many residents struggle to keep sustainable backyard gardens going (P8WM). Non-profit and faith-based organisations have arguably better means to access land on which to grow food gardens, and accordingly play a large role in addressing food security and access issues in Kayamandi through the establishment of such gardens. Most focus their efforts on feeding schemes in an effort to feed school-age and pre-school children.

These food gardens address the problem of bringing nutritious food closer to the community on a larger scale than what backyard gardens can achieve. Alternative access points to fresh vegetables are limited to a few small vendors close to the Kayamandi Mall, as spaza shops usually only sell a few types of fresh produce in limited supply, such as apples, bananas, potatoes and cabbages; otherwise residents must travel to central Stellenbosch to purchase from vendors at the Stellenbosch taxi rank or supermarkets. Most food garden programmes are able to grow a variety of vegetables, including spinach, carrots, cabbage, spring onions, broccoli, beans, corn, and pumpkins, depending on the season. Backyard gardens, due to limited space, often only grow one or two types of vegetables, with spinach proving successful in most cases.

Beyond addressing issues of food security and nutrition, however, food gardening is an important link in the network of foodways in Kayamandi, which binds its practitioners with rich cultural and notably sensory traditions tied to the landscape, especially for the Xhosa people. Dold and Cocks (2012) studied the importance of plants and vegetation in the formation of Xhosa identity, from the rural to the urban township

context. They note the ritual significance of the forest not only to the daily activities of rural Xhosa communities, but to their religious practices involving ancestor worship (2012). The practice of *ukutheza*<sup>85</sup> (collecting wood) is considered an enjoyable female chore, as women “look forward to the opportunity of getting out of the house, chatting with friends and spending time in the forest under the benevolent eyes of the ever-present ancestors” (Dold & Cocks 2012: 15). Women take pride in this activity, as they are judged by “the size and neatness of her *igoqo* (woodpile)”, which is used for cooking food and bitter “*imifino* (pot-herbs)”<sup>86</sup> (ibid.). When these women move to an urban environment, they “often say that wood-gathering is one activity they miss the most” (ibid.). Dold and Cocks also touch on an important observation, that in the Xhosa ancestral religion, the forest environment is considered to be a positive space, which “bestows spiritual health and well-being,” where the village or urban environment is a negative space (2012: 17). Understanding this belief casts the experiences of people who have moved to the township from the rural environment in sharp relief.

Dold and Cocks’s observations of the importance of landscape and the cultivation and processing of plants in Xhosa culture provide critical insight into the meaningful interpretation of the role that food gardens have and also *could* have in the foodways of Kayamandi as explored through a sociomuseological practice. Collecting wood and cooking indigenous vegetables are sensory practices that Xhosa women are unable to practise in the township, as fire is rarely used to cook with in homes, and wild indigenous vegetables hardly grow in the urbanised environment. The cultivation of domesticated vegetables, however, is the closest equivalent to which these traditional practices can be compared in the context of the township. It would be relevant to suggest, then, that food gardening provides the often neglected demographic of older Xhosa women with the ability to practise at least some of the sensory skills with which they grew up in the rural context, in the township.

One food garden programme specifically targets this group, in recognising that “[m]ost of the mothers they have a lower level of education ... they make a living out of social grants” (P4BF). In working with this

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<sup>85</sup> “Derived from *ukukhweza*, meaning to fetch, and *umthi*, meaning tree” (Dold & Cocks 2012: 227).

<sup>86</sup> *Imifino* are defined as indigenous and wild leafy vegetables, and is associated with complex practices of collection, cooking and sharing, mostly involving women and children (Dold & Cocks 2012: 105–108).

demographic, the participant involved with this programme noted, “We’ve also discovered that there are matters like not only the nutrition part, also people they are depressed” (P4BF). The inability to practise the (sensory) skills and indigenous knowledge that these women bring from the rural Eastern Cape could be one cause of depression and frustration. The staff of these programmes also have to battle with commonly-held perceptions in the community about the cost of a modern, healthy lifestyle: “It’s a struggle, if you introduce healthy eating they say we don’t have money” (P4BF). Moreover, the township environment typically does not feature many forested spaces to which to escape, which are mentioned as vital to promoting well-being and health for the Xhosa community (Dold & Cocks 2012).

Although food gardens cannot stand in for forests, and spinach does not substitute *imifino*, I would suggest that food gardens at least provide the ability for a neglected demographic of Xhosa people, often with no other recourse to employment, to practise and apply comparable traditional knowledge and skills in the urban environment of the township towards a sustainable livelihood. Thus, food gardens could play an important role in a sociomuseological practice of foodways, in that they function to nurture not only the cultivation of vegetables for socio-economic livelihoods, but could also encourage the exchange of indigenous (sensory) knowledge that could contribute to sustainable cultural livelihoods. This is likely true not only of the Xhosa community, but other cultural communities in Kayamandi as well, whether from within South Africa or elsewhere on the continent.

The exchange of indigenous sensory knowledge is also of critical importance from an inter-generational as well as inter-gender perspective, to combat entrenched cultural perceptions of generational and gender bias in foodways. Dweba and Mearns argue for the preservation and dissemination of indigenous knowledge of traditional vegetables in rural Xhosa communities as it is critical to their cultural livelihoods, given the tendency of this knowledge to disappear in the face of urbanisation taking place with younger generations, where the consumption of such vegetables is stigmatised as “primitive” and “poor”, and its taste described as “boring” (2011). The members of the born-free<sup>87</sup> generation, as it is known, are typically

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<sup>87</sup> In South Africa, “born-frees” is the term used to describe young South Africans, of any race, who were born after the transition to democracy in 1994.

more interested in Western or “modern” foods and practices. As one participant from Kayamandi, who is identifiably a born-free, explained:

Eating pastas and all the other Western foods, it really makes me understand them [Westerners] even more, what they prefer, how they do things. For instance I have actually adapted to that culture, because I cook that food, if I have money and time to myself. I’m not really into *pap* or samp and beans. Because I’m just not interested in it (P23BM).

Adapting to Western standards also applies, beyond foodways, to the way language and accents are viewed as an expression of self. He explained, “I see other accents or black accents as not the way how I want to live life. Or how I want to present myself” (P23BM).

Thus there is a pervasive disconnect between the urbanised generation known as the born-frees, and the systems of indigenous knowledge as practised by their elders in the rural context. The consumption of indigenous vegetables also indicates pervasive gender bias. *Imifino* are traditionally considered to make men “weak” if eaten, even though the practices surrounding the preparation and consumption thereof arguably are indicative of positive community building among women (Dold & Cocks 2012). Where food gardens could then be considered for its potential positive symbolism in promoting cross-generational interaction and female agency, so *shebeens* are often negatively perceived as violent and male-dominated spaces within the foodways system, even though the cultural traditions of consumption and historical politics underlying these sites are far more complex.





Figure 5.4 – A tavern in Kayamandi started by P13BM's family

### 5.2.2.3 *Shebeens* and taverns

*Shebeens* and taverns have a long history in Kayamandi that is deeply integrated with the movements that played a role in transforming the political system of both local and national government. Today, these sites function primarily as social spaces where alcohol is sold and consumed; they play a central role in the social and cultural life of many township residents. *Shebeens* have gained a public reputation as contested spaces, as they are viewed negatively by some as contributing to alcohol-induced crime, yet to others are symbols of belonging and togetherness (Daya & Wilkins 2012). Even if these sites are considered by some as precarious in terms of safety, they function as key connecting points in the larger network of foodways, as for a large proportion of township residents, *shebeens* offer spaces of commensal gathering not found elsewhere in everyday life.

*Shebeens* can in some ways be considered to function as contemporary, urbanised platforms for Xhosa beer-drinking rituals, which have a rich history and continue to be practised in rural communities. A literature study of beer-drinking rituals (Dold & Cocks 2012; McAllister 2006) reveals some contextual details which point to relevant parallels between contemporary and traditional Xhosa practices of beer consumption, which support the notion that *shebeens* offer an adapted space in which such rituals could continue to be practised. According to McAllister, who studied beer drinking in a rural Xhosa community, “beer drinks are a crucial aspect of a rural Xhosa attempt to maintain homestead production and an agrarian lifestyle in the context of apartheid rule, a context which lingers on despite the formal disappearance of the apartheid state” (2006: 13). Thus, beer drinking in the rural context should be considered for its socio-political relevance, as it is directly implicated in the traditional Xhosa “structured forms of commensality”<sup>88</sup> which in this case manifest in the brewing, exchange and sharing of beer (McAllister 2006) as a form of cultural preservation. In summarising McAllister’s observations of such structured practices, it is relevant to mention that traditional beer drinking in the Xhosa culture is both heavily hierarchical and gendered (reflecting the social standings of different Xhosa clans, especially males) and functions across a spectrum of ritual and everyday uses in effecting “sociability, commensality,

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<sup>88</sup> McAllister notes that “[b]eer is the only drink that is regarded as both alcoholic beverage and food”, as it has a “high food value” in relation to commensality (2006: 108). In this context then, beer is understood to be equated with food, in its habitual as well as ritual use.



communal harmony and neighbourliness" (2006: 23). In essence, he argues that beer drinking functions as a relational activity of commensality, as it informs and reforms "reciprocal social connections" of significance to the daily lives of Xhosa communities (2006: 17). Even though McAllister's view relates to data acquired in the rural context, his interpretation of these rituals provides a relevant background to the data collected on the subject of drinking in the township of Kayamandi, which similarly indicates the importance of acknowledging the socio-political history and context of the community.

In Kayamandi, the precursor to what would today be considered a *shebeen* or tavern was the old Beer Hall, opened in 1962 by a local superintendent (P13BM). I learned in conversations with both older and middle-aged residents that beer halls were established in townships during the apartheid years as government-sanctioned spaces where black labourers were encouraged to consume alcohol, in order for such activity to be contained. The Kayamandi Beer Hall was also known as "118" among residents, as it was the 118<sup>th</sup> building to be erected in Kayamandi (P13BM). One older resident remembers that the Beer Hall was an important part of the apartheid struggle in his youth, as PAC<sup>89</sup> meetings were sometimes held there (P13BM). According to P1BM and P14BM, political activism in the 1980s and early 1990s also revolved around the Beer Hall, when black students and school children targeted delivery vans and used guerilla tactics to get government attention for better education. One participant commented that "[i]n 1993 when [Chris] Hani<sup>90</sup> got killed, the people stoned it [the beer hall]" (P20WM), and the Beer Hall fell into disarray. It was this beer hall that was eventually reincarnated, in part, as Kasi Kitchen.

Locally owned taverns were also established during the apartheid era, growing from the need for social gathering space that was less policed than the beer hall. One participant remembers:

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<sup>89</sup> The PAC (Pan-Africanist Congress) is a black nationalist movement and political party of South Africa. The PAC, along with the ruling African National Congress (ANC), was banned by the South African national government during the apartheid years, hence its members had to resort to secret gatherings to meet and mobilise its members.

<sup>90</sup> Chris Hani was the leader of the South African Communist Party and one of the most celebrated leaders of the liberation struggle in South Africa. His assassination in 1993 caused widespread riots in the country, and is believed to have been a crucial turning point in the dismantling of apartheid.

It was during the UDF<sup>91</sup> campaign [in the 1980s]. So each and every Friday there was a meeting, either we go to town or somewhere else, even in Cloetesville.<sup>92</sup> When the meeting is finished, then guys are thirsty. So they will come to my place (P13BM).

P13BM described how he had to go out to buy a “*kraantjie*” (a five-litre beer keg), so that he and his friends could share a drink. His wife decided to turn this post-meeting ritual into a business, and converted the family home into a popular tavern. Although ejected from the premises in 1994, the family is now fighting legal battles to retrieve ownership of the property (P11BM).

Considering the historical context of *shebeens* in Kayamandi, then, it is clear that these sites – from their establishment and set against the practice of traditional beer-drinking rituals as described above – are crucial to the understanding of the socio-political landscape of the township. *Shebeens* should be recognised as critical sites of political resistance in the historical context, through the facilitation of commensal interaction. The question arises whether this historical resistive function follows through to their contemporary manifestation.

Today, taverns and *shebeens* have a diverse clientele, and they service different neighbourhoods in the township. Some participants suggested that *shebeens* have in fact surpassed *spaza* shops in number, which indicates their relevance within the greater network of foodways in Kayamandi: “Plus minus there could be, Jesus Christ, more than a thousand *shebeens*. Because Kayamandi it has a lot of shacks at the moment. You will pass three shacks, then there’s a *shebeen*. Pass another five shacks, there’s a *shebeen*” (P1BM). The high number of *shebeens* in Kayamandi is indicative of a growing informal market for alcohol, as a *shebeen* need not be anything more formal than a fridge and a few chairs. One participant described the set-up as follows: “They use a deep-freezer for storing their alcohol. Then they sell it. Your close friends would come and buy the beers, and sit around, and that’s a *shebeen*. Without the police knowing about it” (P23BM).

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<sup>91</sup> The United Democratic Front (UDF) was an anti-apartheid movement that galvanised civil society groups across races, religions, gender and classes to oppose the apartheid government.

<sup>92</sup> Cloetesville is a neighbourhood situated close to Kayamandi in the periphery of Stellenbosch. Its socio-economic conditions are similar to those of Kayamandi, with arguably less informal settlement, and its majority demographic would be described as coloured or mixed race.

Some larger, recognised *shebeens* and taverns also include recreational offerings, like game consoles, pool tables, and even gym equipment. They are also known for playing loud house music, which is popular in the townships, as well as for broadcasting soccer matches aired on television. Dominoes and dice are often played either inside or outside *shebeens*, and these games are often used to gamble a few coins or small notes.

The primary focus of the *shebeens* and taverns, however, is to sell alcohol. From my conversations it was understood that, in Kayamandi, beer is the most popular drink by a large margin, followed by hard liquor such as whisky and brandy. Quart-sized beers (750 ml) are most popular for sharing between friends, and are also called “wash downs” (P14BM). As mentioned earlier in this chapter, one participant elaborated on the difference between the “green stuff”, referring to beer sold in green bottles, and those in brown bottles (P22BM). His comment reveals the importance of visual symbolism in beer consumption, as “green” beers are considered more expensive and aspirational than the rest, regardless of the taste. Some *shebeens* also sell *umqombothi*, a home-brewed maize beer typically brewed for ritual occasions but also for everyday use, which is decanted into tin buckets and shared between friends. I found the taste of *umqombothi* distinctly sour and fermented, and I noticed that some people drink it while also sipping a comparatively sweet and bitter commercial beer. With a small tin of *umqombothi* selling for R15, it is somewhat cheaper than commercial beers, and for this reason some people in the townships may prefer to consume these home brews (P14BM). Some *shebeens* also sell a few snacks, but food is mostly outsourced to either surrounding *spazas* or *chisa nyama* vendors. P14BM commented that younger men are sent from the *shebeens* to order and purchase food for the older men. As one participant also observed, “Some of them they just want meat, some people are very addicted to meat [coming from the *shebeen*]” (P1BM).

On speaking with young, local residents about *shebeen* culture, it was pointed out to me that the way that black people in the township socialise with alcohol was different to what I, as a white person, was used to. One participant (P14BM) suggested that he accompany me to a *shebeen*, to allow me to experience the environment for myself. As a young, unemployed black “entrepreneur” this participant had grown up in Kayamandi and had spent much of his young adult years in and among the *shebeens*. He explained, over a beer, how he believed white and black people have different drinking habits:

We don't drink like white people. Like white people, if you're going out, there's six or seven of us, everybody pays their tab. To us, it's not like that, because it's bullshit. Not all of us work, not all of us have money, not all of us get paid. So it might just be one guy buying for all of us. It's just that simple (P14BM).

He continued:

One cigarette can be smoked by six people. One quart of beer can be drank by four guys. Ja, there's TB [tuberculosis] now and I also get scared but that's how it is. One bottle brandy can be drank by ten people. Depending whose crew you are with at the time (P14BM).

This participant's comments reflect the observations made by McAllister regarding the rural context, that beer drinking is a communal and political activity which is implicated in a complex network of relations informed by social, economic and cultural factors. In the above-mentioned case, responsibility for paying for drinks is vested in those that can afford to sponsor the rest, and this informs the social relations of the group going forward, in a similar way that clan hierarchies function in the rural context (McAllister 2006).

P14BM also described the practice of "Sunday Chill", which is understood as the relaxed, social drinking following the "hard" drinking of the weekend:

This is the best time to drink in the townships, the niggers<sup>93</sup> are calm, they are relaxed, it's not hard-core like Friday and Saturday. It's relaxed. You've got nice music, chilling outside in the chairs, so the aggression levels are lower. You're relaxed.

He further pointed out that "[t]here's also Monday, if you're a drinker, you have to go get at least two or four beers after work. It's just the culture, you have to get that shit out of your system" (P14BM). His comment appears to indicate a lasting legacy of the apartheid beer hall system, which encouraged regular drinking in order to forget about the oppressive conditions that dictated daily life for people in the townships. What was a calculated negative behavioural reinforcement in the beer halls seems to have embedded itself as a social habit, now played out in the *shebeen*. Layered over the cultural context of

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<sup>93</sup> The term "nigger" appears to be accepted among the youth in the township, as a friendly term in close circles. It is, however, not widely used when in formal conversation, especially not in the presence of elders.

traditional beer-drinking practices, the *shebeen* becomes a contested site of the expression of commensality – although the harmonising and communal functions of beer drinking yet appear to manifest. The participant's comments above suggest that the resistive aim of the *shebeen* takes on a more sinister tone in that beer drinking also appears to display resistance to facing the harsh realities and oppression experienced in everyday life, expressed as violence toward the self through excessive alcohol consumption.

This sometimes destructive habit of social drinking in *shebeens* also extends to the religious context, and features in the rituals surrounding funerals, which are considered important communal events where several hundred people often gather. The mourners first meet at the graveyard for the ceremony, and afterwards return to the township to eat and socialise. P14BM described the practice of "Before Tears" and "After Tears" as follows:

While we are waiting for the ceremony, we are in the *shebeens* waiting for the buses to take us to the graveyard. After the graveyard we come back, we wash the hands, you grab the takeaway,<sup>94</sup> you chow, you go to After Tears. You should look at the shit that they're drinking. Hennessey's and shit like that (P14BM).

P14BM aptly summed up his perception of Kayamandi social culture by saying, "To us, you're considered a very dull person if you don't drink. Really" (P14BM).

In response to P14BM's claim of the incongruity between white and black drinking practices, and based on my experience of sitting in a *shebeen* as a white female, I asked some black participants about their own multiracial and mixed-gender experiences in the *shebeen* context. One of the participants responded as follows:

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<sup>94</sup> Although it is a ceremonial occurrence as opposed to being an everyday ritual, it is worth explaining the interviewee's mention of takeaway food in this instance, as it does form a large part of the social importance of funerals in the community. In the case of a funeral, food is cooked at the family home by a group of females that are close to the mourning family of the deceased. It usually includes African dishes such as meat stew, samp and beans, maize *pap* and vegetables. Meals are dished into Styrofoam containers, ready to be picked up by those returning from the funeral ceremony, either to be eaten while gathered at the home or taken as takeaways.

Always when you go to the *shebeen* with white people [especially girls], [local] people are begging for money, [saying] “Buy me a beer” or “I love you, can you be my girlfriend?” Also, people say things in Xhosa, and [the white person will] ask, “What did they say?” Some guy might be saying silly things,<sup>95</sup> and now you have to change the whole conversation (P1BM).

Another participant elaborated, “Others will get jealous as well, that you are with a [white person], that you think you’re better, high profile. They think you’ve made it in life” (P14BM). From their comments, I understood that multiracial experiences in the *shebeen* were interpreted as not only frequently uncomfortable for the black participants, but problematic in terms of the deeper inequalities such experiences provoked. On this matter, P14BM commented as follows: “For me, there will never be where we feel equal. They [white people] will always be higher than us, in that sense of the word. I’m always looking at who are higher, and I’m trying to go there.” His comment is indicative of an entrenched feeling of inequality that, according to him, is impossible to overcome, and having a beer together would not make any difference. I was aware, however, that this comment could also have been made in order to “please” me, given his understanding of the context of my research in investigating commensality across cultures. Although I am certain there is at least some truth to his statement, the opinions heard from participants from the born-free generation, in contrast, revealed an attitude which is less concerned with racial disconnect. As the aforementioned participant also admitted, “The [racial] connection is already happening with the born-frees. In our age group [30–40 years], that disconnect will never stop. For us it’s too late” (P14BM).

I in turn reflected on my own experience in visiting the *shebeen* with P14BM. I recalled the bitterness of the beer, the smoky atmosphere and the crass swearwords he uttered, as well as my distinct bodily awareness of being the only white female in the *shebeen*. These memories contributed to my sensory interpretation of the role of the *shebeen* and alcohol in the township, but also informed a much deeper and embodied understanding of the struggle of cultural difference that goes beyond historical legacy. The experience of hearing his often violent expressions of narrative paired with the bitter taste of beer forced a sensory

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<sup>95</sup> By “silly things” I understood the participant to mean comments that might be derogatory or offensive in nature, regarding gender or race.

awareness of struggle that was informed by my interpretation of the complex political and social underpinnings of beer-drinking as a practice of resistance as *well* as harmony, violence and nurturing.

Considering, then, the diverse sensory interpretations that *shebeens* hold for members of different cultural and racial communities, *shebeens* as sites within a sociomuseological network of foodways are contested. They must critically function to acknowledge the importance of historical context and resistance given the post-apartheid moment through the commensal and harmonising act of sharing beer. They must also, however, acknowledge its often negative manifestation in destructive and violent behaviour towards self and others, and the feelings of discomfort and inequality that could arise in multiracial and mixed-gendered shebeen experiences. Given the contention surrounding this type of site, the risk related to its sociomuseological function in seeking cross-cultural tolerance and understanding is notable. This aspect is discussed in section 5.2.3.3.





Figure 5.5 – Chickens for sale near the *chisa nyama* vendors



#### 5.2.2.4 *Chisa nyama* and takeaway vendors

Driving into the township of Kayamandi, one's first encounter is often with the smell of smoke, followed by the sight of a traffic jam of taxis and the *chisa nyama* vendors searing meat on their wood-fire barbecues for hungry passengers. The taxi rank is the main transport hub for the community,<sup>96</sup> resulting in a large customer base for the vendors, especially during peak travel times. It is probably here that the sights, smells, sounds, tastes and textures of life in Kayamandi are most concentrated. The smell of smoke hangs in the air, and stays in one's nostrils and on one's clothes long after leaving Kayamandi. Soapy water from the carwash up the street mixes with the blood of freshly slaughtered chickens. The cackle of the surviving brood punctuates the conversations between the female vendors preparing smileys – the dead sheep's bare teeth grinning as the hot iron sears away the remaining hair.

In Kayamandi, there is a main hub of five to six *chisa nyama* vendors, with other vendors scattered around the township. The specific number of vendors is difficult to determine, as new businesses open and close due to changing circumstances. Hours of operation are variable, and many also work from their homes. There are also vendors that serve other takeaway foods that are not cooked on an open fire, although *chisa nyama* is the most popular type of prepared food available for purchase. These vendors occupy a unique position within the network of foodways sites in Kayamandi, as they present an "informalised" manifestation of restaurant or fast-food practices, which reflects a public-focused and street-facing commensal culture – in this sense these vendors offer a unique bridge in commensal practice between the marginalised context of Kayamandi and the dominant gastronomical culture of Stellenbosch.

Most vendors occupy a refashioned shipping container, or alternatively use a converted oil drum in which fire is made as a cooking station, or both. The Coca-Cola Company provides support and branding for some of the vendors close to the taxi rank, in the form of a container as well as signage. One vendor commented that she would like to acquire a Coca-Cola-sponsored container, even if she already had her

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<sup>96</sup> Mini-bus taxis are the most commonly used form of transport in Kayamandi, and follow determined routes throughout the township, as well as to central Stellenbosch, where many residents work. Commuters from Kayamandi either board a taxi on its route close to their residence, or walk to the taxi rank to board if the routes do not coincide with their destination.

own – it seems the branding helps attach a certain prestige to the business (P2BF). When asked where she started her business, she explained, “I started this business in my shack. My shack is one room, I was sleeping there and I was cooking there. Then I decided to keep the money and to buy this container” (P2BF). When asked about the prevalence of vendors selling prepared food, whether takeaways or in a restaurant-type setting, one participant commented that “[i]t’s not easy to find where they specialise, where it’s like a normal restaurant” (P1BM). He continued, “There’s not much here in Kayamandi about food, there are very few people selling food. People from the township walk to [Stellenbosch] town to buy takeaways” (P1BM). He explained that “[i]n Jo’burg, in Cape Town, you also find African restaurants, they are doing very well. Townships like Khayelitsha also have restaurants that are doing very well, because they are big. It’s more local people that support them” (P1BM). From his comments it was clear that P1BM saw a gap in the food culture of Kayamandi, that eating food in a restaurant-type setting did not fit the socio-economic realities of his community which rather sought this experience in the dominant centre of Stellenbosch.

*Chisa nyama* vendors appear to sell more or less the same items, which mostly consist of various cuts of meat or offal, including intestines and liver. Sheep’s heads, known as *smileys*, as well as pigs’ heads are common. On one of several walking tours of Kayamandi, one participant, working as a chef, took me to witness a pig slaughter. I noticed a small river of blood trickling down the street as we approached, while several men poured boiling water on the carcass in order to scrape off its hair with shovels. I felt my own hair stand on end. We left before they had finished, but I understood from the participant that butchering a pig in the street was common practice – and good income for the butchers no less. P1BM described the preparation of pigs’ heads, called *varkkoppies*: “They buy them and cut them into half, wash them in a big drum, boil them for two three hours, then people come and buy it, like *skaapkoppie* [sheep’s heads].” Besides heads, dishes made of intestines such as tripe (cow’s stomach) are popular. Tripe sold at the *chisa nyama* vendors is often cooked without the stomach lining having been scrubbed clean, which gives it a distinct flavour. Before tasting it I was mentally prepared for the violent food poisoning that could follow, but I was pleasantly surprised by its rich yet mellow, earthy flavour and soft texture, even if its appearance was unlike anything I had seen before, resembling dark sea anemones floating in a milky, savoury liquid. *Umleqwa* chicken (also known as “runaway chicken”, as one has to run after it to catch it) is also a popular seller for the vendors, who sell them either cooked, or raw, with feathers or without (P1BM). P1BM also

explained the popularity of chicken feet: “There’s a new fashion of chicken feet. They braai them, some of them they steam them or cook them. I prefer them when they’re boiled, [and] you put some Aromat.<sup>97</sup> There’s no meat, it’s just wow, it’s unbelievable” (P1BM). Sucking on a chicken leg later on, I sort of understood what he meant – the salty snack was arguably as satisfying as a packet of chips.

The vendors who do not cook on open fires sell cooked meals that are prepared on gas hobs in their container kitchens. P2BF claimed to be the first vendor in Kayamandi to have branched out in this way, to sell cooked food as opposed to meat only. For breakfast she often offers steamed bread and a chicken stew that includes its intestines: “Xhosa chicken must be water and salt only, and the intestines I put separately [after]” (P2BF). She also sells *amagwinya* or *vetkoek*, either plain or filled with sliced polony meat or chicken livers cooked with onion. Her cooked meals include meat (beef or chicken stew), starch (maize *pap* or rice) and vegetables (spinach, pumpkin and carrots) and sometimes salads in summertime.

I visited this vendor mid-morning just before school children started arriving to buy their break-time *amagwinya*. She kindly invited me to watch how she prepared the chicken livers, but shortly afterwards I noticed her whispering a few rushed words in isiXhosa to another participant who was acting as a translator. Leaving her container later, he explained that the vendor was very worried when she realised I was a student from the university, as she had bought the chicken livers from a contact in Kayamandi who sells stolen produce from the university residence kitchens. Never before had a few chicken livers taken on such powerful significance, as I reflected on how this simple food item, originally intended for what I – and likely the vendor as well – imagined as a privileged few students, now filled the bellies of a handful of hungry school children in Kayamandi, even if by questionable means. I recognise that not all university students are privileged; however, when reflecting on the disparity experienced between the streets of Kayamandi and the university campus, I again became aware that the university system creates an atmosphere which signifies privilege, a certain level of wealth and by default adequate access to food, even if this is not the reality of many students.

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<sup>97</sup> Aromat is a popular, general-purpose seasoning with a distinct savoury flavour.

When asked about the general tendency of Kayamandi residents to purchase prepared food, P1BM responded that there are not many such vendors (as mentioned above); besides, "... they can't afford to eat out, so they prefer to make their own food. In our culture, in our township, there are very rare[ly] people that stay less than five people in a house. I was speaking to a lady yesterday; they are fifteen in their house" (P1BM). He continued, "Just imagine if you earn R400 per week, or R600, the most [important] thing if you are a family of six, it's buy food, for all of us" (P1BM). Given this information, I asked about those who can afford takeaways: "Those kind of *chisa nyamas*, they are people really like your taxi drivers, municipality guys, your teachers, they are the ones supporting those people. They buy more on weekends, according to their budgets" (P1BM). I also observed during observations and interviews, that school children form a large customer base for many of the vendors, specifically during school breaks, when they come to buy *amagwinya* as well as chicken feet, wrapped in newspaper. Another participant affirmed that business fluctuates according to the number of people who are employed at any given time: "Sometimes it's going, up and downs" (P2BF). She also noted that "[e]veryone in summer is working" (P2BF). I attributed her comment to the fact that seasonal, manual labour is a common form of employment in Kayamandi, with many more people employed as vineyard or construction workers in the summer than in the winter months. She confirmed that she is busiest in the summertime, because "[p]eople ... go to work; they don't have time to cook" (P2BF).

I subsequently asked the participant how she managed her stall when business started to pick up in the summer, to which she replied, "You see I took my sisters in Eastern Cape to help me. She came here, she was young. My sisters help me. Now my business is growing better" (P2BF). Upon my noticing that her sister was highly pregnant at the time of the interview, she stated, "My sister is pregnant so she can't help me, so I asked this lady [my neighbour] to help us" (P2BF). I also enquired about working hours, curious at what time she had to commence preparation to sell breakfast. She replied, "I wake up early in the morning, maybe sometimes 04:30 a.m., because past 05:00 a.m., when the people come to work, they must come buy *vetkoeks* (*amagwinya*)" (P2BF). This unwavering dedication to her enterprise is supported by her faith, which in this vendor's container was represented in a small photograph pinned up between a packet of maize meal and Aromat on top of the fridge. The vendor told me that it was a photograph of her mother. Another participant, however, explained to me on a later occasion that the photograph was of Nomthunzi

'MaNgconde' Mali, a popular spiritual healer in the Eastern Cape.<sup>98</sup> He explained, "The belief is that she protects the business and helps it grow. People travel to her, like the Muslims go to the pilgrimage, but they go to her and give her donations" (P14BM). He continued, "You[ve] got to go back, time and time again, four or five times a year. You go and give donations, money, and supposedly she's protecting you from your enemies" (P14BM). The translator elaborated that it was common practice to display a picture of her: "You have it [the picture of 'MaNgconde'] somewhere, in your wallet or in your shop" (P14BM), in order for the business to be blessed. I recalled images of tiny shrines filled with flowers and the smell of incense experienced in a market in Indonesia, or the tiny white cats with bobbing arms in Chinese restaurants, which perform the same function for local food vendors in those contexts as the picture of 'MaNgconde' did in Kayamandi. I was struck by how such a small and seemingly insignificant ritual instantly connected this food vendor in a South African township to so many others across the world, in pursuit of making ends meet through cooking food. In this way the *chisa nyama* and takeaway vendors form an important connecting point to a global network of foodways in their function as informal and localised "restaurants", which respond to the socio-economic conditions of their customers by providing convenience food suited to local taste and economic abilities. It is in their interpreted authenticity, in functioning as "restaurants", that these sites become relevant to a discussion of a sociomuseological practice, which seeks cross-cultural tolerance and understanding through taste.

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<sup>98</sup> Although academic literature on 'MaNgconde', the accepted nickname for Nomthunzi Mali, is lacking, a brief reference can be found in Edgar (2007: 54) as well as a journalistic interpretation in Sifile (2011).



Figure 5.6 – Photograph of Nomthunzi 'MaNgconde' Mali in P2BF's container kitchen





Figure 5.7 – Dining room table set for a “Dine with a Local” lunch at P5BF’s house in Kayamandi

### 5.2.2.5 Home-based dining sites

Although *spazas*, by definition, as well as many *shebeens*, operate out of family homes, there are two types of commensal sites in Kayamandi where the home forms a fundamental part of the experience of foodways. The first is known as the “homestays” in Kayamandi that emerged around the tourism and volunteering boom of the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup held in South Africa. These sites function primarily as guesthouses, while some host tourists for “Dine with a Local” lunch experiences. The second is the home of a local Kayamandi resident, who hosts a weekly gathering called “Reconciliation Lunch.” These sites should not be understood as examples of private home dining, which is not the focus of this study, but rather as unique expressions of commensal gathering that relies on the home and the experience thereof as connecting point. For this reason, home-based dining sites such as homestays and the “Reconciliation Lunch” function as a mediating point in the network of foodways in Kayamandi, which connects the local relevance of the *chisa nyama* sites with the taste of tourism and charity, and uses the space of the home to do so across the realms of private and public, as well as across cultural difference.

P5BF was one of the first women involved in the Kayamandi homestay programme. This programme was developed from the need to house mostly international student volunteers based at projects in Kayamandi on a short-term basis, with an added aim to create tourism opportunities. The “homestay mothers”, as they came to be known, accordingly received hospitality training and each started receiving volunteers in their homes which they hosted on a bed and breakfast basis:

There was a lady who wanted us, eight or ten of us, starting this business of keeping the volunteers that come to Stellenbosch, and we were the first. We got trainings, we went here and there seeing places. It started like that (P5BF).

From the homestay programme, P5BF developed a catering business which she operates from her home. She also receives tourists on township tours for a “Dine with a Local” experience. The “Dine with a Local” experience is offered by several township tour guides, and includes a small network of caterers in the community who are willing to open their homes to small groups of tourists for a traditional “African” lunch. Local tour operators ensure a steady flow of tourists to Kayamandi, and are able to offer the “Dine with a Local” option for as long as there are caterers who are willing and able to open their homes. For P5BF, who



is already beyond retirement age, catering for “Dine with a Local” provides her with the unique ability to earn an income from home:

I prefer catering because when I’m doing catering I do it here, at my place. I’m peeling, cooking, cleaning, everything, and when I’m tired I just sit down. Nobody asks me why I sit down. I just sit down, have a cup of tea, take a breath and start again. It’s easy for me (P5BF).

The comfort of cooking in her own home is vital to the experience thereof, and the type of food she cooks also reflects this comfort. During her “Dine with a Local” lunches, P5BF offers visitors a taste of the dishes she has carried with her through childhood memories: roast chicken with gravy, beef stews, *umxhaxha* (mashed pumpkin with corn), *chakalaka* (a spicy mixed-vegetable condiment), *morogo* (spinach with potato), *stywe pap* (stiff maize porridge), ginger beer (non-alcoholic), *amagwinya*, and steamed bread, among other dishes. Knowledge of this type of cooking is generally passed on through the family:

I learned from my mother. My mother used to work for a white people’s high school. She was a cook there. After school I had to go there. And then I started to learn the big dishes, because it was a big school. I had to help my mother bake ten loaves of bread a day. What I’m doing here I learned doing at my mother’s place (P5BF).

In her kitchen there are no visible signs of recipe books or hand-written notes, as she prepares all the dishes from memory, instilled over years of observing and helping her mother. Not only does memory play a large role in P5BF’s practice but also the ability, in the comfort of her own home, to express herself while she cooks:

I’m a humming lady, when I’m doing my cooking I like to sing. So I still have that little something of singing when I’m doing cleaning; humming. When I’m making my food I always like to have a smile on my face. We were told when we were doing training you mustn’t be found with a sour face (P5BF).

Sitting in P5BF’s home, which is furnished with heirlooms and decorative objects she was given by her mother, the feeling of comfort and being “at home” is powerful. When asked about some of the heirlooms she received from her mother, she mentions the cutlery as an object of pride: “I still have my mother’s cutlery, which is the same cutlery that I use when I have some guests” (P5BF).

I remember my first lunch in her home: There was the smell of freshly baked bread, and the sound of something bubbling on the stove welcomed her lunch visitors. The small dining room, a few cubic metres in size, featured a neatly laid table for roughly fifteen guests, with the cutlery inherited from her mother. P5BF had the appearance of a grandmother, and in her gentle demeanour probably reminded visitors of their own mother or grandmother. She placed dishes of chicken, potato, *pap*, *chakalaka*, pumpkin, spinach and *amagwinya* on the table, all made for sharing among the mostly German guests. She was soft-spoken, and patiently explained each dish, describing how she had made it and suggesting how it should be eaten – for example she instructed guests to eat the *pap* with the gravy, “so that you can get the taste of what you are eating” (P5BF). Her food was warm, soft and comforting, with no particular tastes that I would describe as out of the ordinary. It tasted of “home”. Even though I was aware that my own home looked different to the one in which I was sitting, the taste resonated with my feeling of being at home.

When I asked her later how she felt about interacting with her often foreign or white guests, she replied, “You know it makes me feel happy because at the very first time, from the start, or when we were growing up, we were not used to white people. More especially in our places. On their coming to my place, it makes me feel that something has changed” (P5BF). For the participant, welcoming white people into her home did not come naturally at first: “I remember the first [white] people who came to my place. Oh no, I was so sick. I get afraid, how am I going to touch these persons? How am I going to do this?” (P5BF). Her comment on *touching* is particularly insightful, as I interpreted that for her, the ability to touch a white person within the intimate space of her home likely caused anxiety and apprehension. After a first successful lunch, and many more thereafter, P5BF believes that hosting “Dine with a Local” meals have changed her, as well as broader society. She also explained:

It’s [about] the way they’re enjoying the food. They enjoy it. After tasting and eating they will tell you that they enjoy it, and that makes me happy. They would also want to know when do we make in our culture that kind of food. Then I tell them when do we make it. I share everything, I don’t have a secret in my ritual (P5BF).

The affirmation of enjoyment and the expression of interest in her cooking practice is thus an important part of the sensory interaction between visitor and homestay mother. In the case of the homestays, the presence of the host “mother” is an integral part of the experience, contributing to feeling welcomed in a home

environment, like a member of a family. This approach to commensality is also echoed in the practice of the weekly “Reconciliation Lunch.”

The weekly “Reconciliation Lunch” is a unique phenomenon in Kayamandi. Its inclusion in the findings appears as an outlier, as it is not a publicly known practice, like the homestays. I decided to include it, however, because it is a regular event that has sustained participation over a number of years. It specifically uses food as reconciliatory medium, and gathers local residents from Kayamandi and central Stellenbosch in commensal activity. The “Reconciliation Lunch” is premised on the simple proposition that people gather around a table once a week, share a meal and their stories in a safe, honest and open environment. P3WF witnessed the concept of the “Reconciliation Lunch” at a community project in Washington, D.C. in the USA and decided to replicate it at her home in Kayamandi. Notably, P3WF is white, and has been living with her family in the township for many years, while actively involved in several community development and charity projects. This is important to mention, as the “Reconciliation Lunch” in this respect is a unique expression of a different approach to a charity project, as it is wholly funded by P3WF, yet is not considered a “soup kitchen” in the traditional sense. Its intentioned purpose is not to feed, but to share in commensal exchange across cultures. The fact of P3WF’s race, however, is important to note as it informs the subtle, yet I would argue unintentional, ways in which power is perceived and exercised at the table. I would also argue that the fact that P3WF is white has encouraged many white residents from central Stellenbosch to venture into the township and join in the lunch as a comfortable entry into Kayamandi, as they may possibly perceive it as a foreign and dangerous place.

For P3WF, the “Reconciliation Lunch” concept was born from a perceived need to bring residents from Kayamandi and central Stellenbosch together:

Food is a way to bring people together. Stellenbosch is so segregated, and you must remember before we lived here, people would drop their maids at the edge of the township; they would never come in here. Lots of people asked, “Is it alright, can we drive in there”? Stellenbosch has changed so much (P3WF).

In hosting the lunches in her own home in Kayamandi, P3WF feels she creates a safe and honest space: “It’s more personal, it shows something of my heart” (P3WF). Her home is situated in a popular neighbourhood of Kayamandi, and many of her black neighbours attend the weekly lunch. The dining table is large, to accommodate the approximately thirty people she hosts, although the number fluctuates every week. Meals are prepared in the adjoining small kitchen, suited to a small family but capable of catering for the larger groups she hosts. Every Wednesday around noon this small kitchen becomes a hive of activity. Every few minutes a soft knock at the kitchen door announces the arrival of another familiar or perhaps unfamiliar face, whether from Kayamandi, Stellenbosch, or a volunteer or exchange student from abroad. One or two cooks are busily roasting vegetables or chicken, and preparing salads, while others are laying the table and slicing bread. A typical lunch features bread, butter, jam and cheese to start, followed by a large plate of food, accompanied by three types of salad, as well as dessert. There are always soft drinks, juice and water on the table, as well as a place mat and neatly laid-out cutlery for every person. The abundance and diversity of food and the place that is created for every person at the table is symbolic of the familial tendency of the “Reconciliation Lunches”, of making participants feel “at home”.

When asked about the cooking process for such a large extended “family”, P3WF explained, “I started with the cooking, but then I started to ask other cooks to come and help” (P3WF). In terms of the meals themselves, she described the process: “I started to cook what I know: *bobotie*,<sup>99</sup> rice, lasagne, braai. Then I would ask a *mama* to make *pap* and sauce. It was a mix of dishes, something of what I know, and then something of what they know” (P3WF). In commenting on the diversity of cultures often seated at the table, she explained, “If there’s another culture that wants to do something [cook a meal], it’s wonderful, then we learn more through food” (P3WF). She stressed the importance of food at the “Reconciliation Lunch”, as it changes the nature of the gathering: “I think in the past there were many platforms attempted such as this. That’s the thing, there has to be food. It does something to how people relate to each other” (P3WF). In discussing the practice of the “Reconciliation Lunch” with one of its regular participants from Kayamandi, P23BM similarly noted, “The difference is, if you’re just having a meeting, there wouldn’t be that much

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<sup>99</sup> *Bobotie* is a Cape Malay-influenced dish of aromatic minced meat with an egg-based topping, typically made in many Afrikaans-speaking homes in the Western Cape. It is popularly considered emblematic of Cape food heritage, and by default European, although its Malaysian-inspired flavours are indicative of the problematic heritage of slavery in the Cape colony (see 3.4).

interest in answering questions, or talking about your life. But as soon as there's a meal, you're able to actually share; there's a load off your shoulders".

Each lunch is opened with prayer, because it is a practice important to P3WF as a self-identified Christian: "I think it would feel very empty without it, but I can understand if someone else continues with it one day that they don't continue with the prayers." Saying grace also often causes people around the table to stretch out their hands to each other in prayer, which, given the often multiracial context, is an intimate and tangible sensory experience of cross-cultural interaction. Many first-time visitors may be holding the hand of a person of a different race or culture for the first time. This small and subtle yet incredibly intimate tangibility is an important sensory interaction experienced in the "Reconciliation Lunches". P3WF also chooses the topic of conversation, often in conjunction with the prayer:

I choose a theme, then we speak around it. It's important first for everyone to say where they were born. That is the beginning of your personhood. To say: "That is actually where I come from ..." (P3WF).

It is perhaps relevant to point out that these practices of praying and choice of the topic of conversation complicate the otherwise democratic and non-denominational spirit of the "Reconciliation Lunch". Although I would argue these practices are not ill-intentioned on the part of P3WF, but rather a practical way of facilitating conversation, they should be noted as coming from her perspective as the host, and therefore from a position of power. It is relevant to note as well, that even though she has been living in the township for many years, P3WF does not claim to understand or know more than anyone else about the daily struggles of many of her fellow township residents – she often expressed surprise or interest in the narratives of black residents that I also found new, for example. She further explained her belief in the value of personhood as it is experienced at the "Reconciliation Lunches":

There is a lot of feeding schemes here, so what's the difference? There's a big difference, because you sit with other people, as a rightful person, and you can share something of yourself. You can't believe what it does to people (P3WF).

When I asked her about the typical person who attends the lunch, she responded, “I think it’s a certain type of person that comes. If I have to think through the years, it is someone who has a need to connect with other people” (P3WF). She explained her thoughts about the people from central Stellenbosch, mostly privileged and white, who usually attend:

The type of people who usually come from town, they commit for a few months or so. They are people that possibly aren’t in a church, but still have a need to connect with others who are different from them. They want to connect with local people. They just want to ask a question, to ask what they [the Kayamandi locals] think about [President] Zuma, for example (P3WF).

In discussing the reasons for attending the “Reconciliation Lunch” with a few of the regular attendees from Kayamandi, however, different motivations start to emerge. One participant answered, “Instead of sitting at home and thinking about one thing ... you go out [to the lunch], [and] you might end up with a good idea or something. It’s nice to social network” (P1BM). Another participant offered the following explanation:

It also depends on your financial situation. Because sometimes you go there to eat the food. Because you’re hungry. So it’s not even about what was prepared, if it was steak or whatever. It’s just because you’re hungry ... There’s that aspect. But there’s also the aspect of meeting people from all walks of life. So sometimes you think you have problems, but then you hear around twenty, twenty-five people, you think you’ve got it bad, then you hear somebody who has it even worse than [me]. So there’s also a sense of when you talk about things you feel better (P14BM).

The diversity in motivations for attending the “Reconciliation Lunch” is of critical importance when considering its inclusion in a network of foodways as framed through a sociomuseological practice. During the lunches, the negotiation between these different motivations is arguably mediated by choosing a topic of discussion which requires lunch visitors to engage in conversation in which they have to share narratives of a personal, rather than a trivial, nature. Even if some around the table are perhaps self-conscious about speaking in front of people, especially those of a different culture or race, having a specific point of conversation around which to engage assists in their conversations becoming more spontaneous and comfortable. This guidance could be critiqued as coming from a position of white privilege, as unintentionally exercised by the host; however, I would argue that it is practically necessary towards the

facilitation of honest conversations around the table, about challenging topics. Many of the regular lunch visitors have professed becoming more confident to speak in a mixed group because of this practice of discussion. Over the course of several months of attending these lunches I witnessed tears, laughter, apprehension and agreement among the visitors, as they allow themselves to become vulnerable in front of others (and Others) at the table. For many, this vulnerability is a key part of the reconciliatory practice of these lunches. The fact that this site is hosted and guided by a white woman should not be ignored, nor should the complexities of the specific power relations and assumptions that this involves be discounted. However, I would argue that the “Reconciliation Lunch” is exactly the kind of practice which prompts self-reflection regarding this fact, and invites commentary about the roles of different cultures around the table.

When asked about the sustainability of the weekly lunches, P3WF commented:

After two years I said, “This is it.” I don’t know. I take it year by year. Of course I want it to continue. I want someone to continue with it. But I must make peace with it if it’s only a season; people’s lives were touched (P3WF).

She also mentioned that she wished that more, specifically privileged, people from Stellenbosch town would have started to engage, whether through the lunches or in another way, with life in Kayamandi: “I’m a little disappointed by now. I realise I’m not a politician. If I had that personality to influence people [maybe more people from town would come to Kayamandi]” (P3WF). She does, however, see the value of her own food-based initiative as one which is perhaps not overtly political: “It’s maybe a more underground thing, on a grassroots level” (P3WF).

I reflected on the above comment in considering the many conversations that I had heard and participated in over the course of several months around her table. P3WF’s slight disappointment is understandable, although not indicative of a failure of the “Reconciliation Lunch” to be a political force. As previously discussed in this dissertation, the political potency of food is often hidden in its everydayness – in that it more often gets digested than debated. The fact that the political potential of food, in this context, plays out in the home environment makes it even more hidden from the public eye. As I argue in the discussion later in this chapter, however, the home is perhaps one of the most relevant and powerful spaces in which



the socio-politics of food can be experienced, or more accurately, *embodied*, and is evidenced by both the above-mentioned sites. These home-based dining sites then should be considered, within a sociomuseological network of Kayamandi foodways, as bridging the motivations between tourism and charity, and the spaces between public and private with intimate cross-cultural encounters, which are perhaps more about the social and sensory capacity of commensality than the material capacity or taste of the food itself.



Figure 5.8 – A “Dine with a Local” lunch served by P5BF in Kayamandi



### 5.2.2.6 Kasi Kitchen revisited

The inclusion of Kasi Kitchen within the rhizomatic structure of a foodways network in Kayamandi necessitated a revisitation of this site beyond the partnership undertaken for this study, in order to examine the more specific sensory details of its potential to act within a sociomuseological practice. In following the iterative process of action research, this revisitation resulted in a sensory analysis of Kasi Kitchen as a township restaurant, with an explicit tourism focus, and within this definition how problematic issues of privilege, race and hunger are implicated in the broader network of foodways. I conducted follow-up interviews with some participants who had formed part of the action research partnership with Kasi Kitchen, but had continued their participation at the restaurant, or had joined the service staff independently of the partnership. Some of the comments revealed a perceived discrepancy in cultural approaches to eating and serving the food at the restaurant, specifically between a predominantly white audience and a predominantly black service staff, of which the participants I interviewed formed a part. One participant described his disgust, for example, when:

I was watching this [white] lady there, she was eating the drumstick with a fork and knife, and I was thinking "Geez, you are really wasting your time." I would've just grabbed the thing and eat it. And then sometimes, there comes a steak, it's got the fat. And then they would cut off the fat. I'm like, "Damn it." They also eat funny in that sense. How could you possibly eat rice with a fork? (P14BM).

The black chef also explained his choice to eventually leave chicken wings off of the menu:

The reason I didn't do the wings anymore, people told me I must cut off that sharp point [of the chicken wing]. So I thought to myself, "What the hell?" One of the advising people they asked me, "Why don't you take this thing off?" To us, the whole thing must be eaten. It's a waste! So *ja*, that's why I changed to drumsticks (P1BM).

Issues of food wastage, beyond its role in cross-cultural misunderstanding between the staff and the diners, also became points of contention between the service staff and the owner of Kasi Kitchen. One participant described a conversation where, "[The owner] asked, 'How can I be feeding you?' And I said, 'You have no idea.' If you are not feeding the staff, you are making them to steal the food. Because how can I be serving

a plate, if I'm hungry in the stomach?" (P14BM). He continued by explaining, "I always thought that was stupid, then again [I'm] not in a position to say. I remember one time they tried to keep it [the cooked food] for the next week, but the smell was so bad, they had to throw it [out], and I was thinking 'If they would have just dished this [food] for us, we would've been fine'" (P14BM). His mention of the smell of the rotten food translated, as I understood, to a feeling of disappointment at the approach to food wastage at Kasi Kitchen. I asked this participant how he interpreted the purpose of a township restaurant, with its explicitly tourism-focused agenda in attempting to facilitate cross-racial interaction between white and black people, given these differences in opinion between himself and the owner. His response was:

Why must I come to you when you want to make this Rainbow Nation, or understand me or whatever, if there's nothing there [to offer]? It's as simple as that. It's a sad story, but it's the truth. There must be something. You have to put something on the table (P14BM).

Another participant confirmed, "If there's no petrol in the engine, you're not gonna start. Serious. It's not that [all] people are lazy. People are very hungry" (P1BM). These comments revealed the vital role hunger plays in the larger discourse of foodways in Kayamandi, and its implication in cross-cultural misunderstanding and intolerance. The motivation of Kasi Kitchen, in attempting to facilitate cross-racial exchange through a commercial township tourist restaurant, clashed with the motivation of those responsible for its daily operations, of putting food on the tables, when they had none in their bodies.

The inclusion of Kasi Kitchen within the rhizomatic network of foodways in Kayamandi revealed the necessity of engaging with issues of privilege and hunger through a sociomuseological practice. The Edible Museum, in this sense, must "put something on the table", if it were to seek cross-cultural tolerance and understanding through foodways in Kayamandi. A sociomuseological practice cannot simply ask its visitors to engage in cross-cultural dialogue, but must seek tangible and transformative encounters that contribute to the well-being of the communities it services. In the thematic discussion below, the notion of a sociomuseological practice as a rhizomatic, networked manifestation of the Edible Museum in the context of Kayamandi is further explored.



Figure 5.9 – Plucking chickens in Kayamandi

### 5.2.3 Discussion

#### 5.2.3.1 Translating the complex modalities and mobilities of foodways in the township

In considering the network of foodways in Kayamandi, a pattern of emphasis on movement and flexibility emerged, in that foodways have over time adapted to the needs of the community and its changing socio-economic and cultural conditions – and still continue to do so. As an outsider, my first impressions of Kayamandi were of constant movement – taxis, people and cars woven into a blur as, no matter what time of day, people were on their way somewhere. The taxi rank resembled a beehive, with taxis dodging children and stray dogs, mingling with commuters and pedestrians.

The importance of the taxi rank as a hub in the system of foodways is notable, and the connection of people to this hub via main thoroughfares and taxi routes gives an indication of how the network of foodways may be geographically mapped in Kayamandi. Foodways tend to be situated along these networked routes, as the constant flow of people determines their turnover, especially considering the sites of *spaza* shops, *shebeens*, and *chisa nyama* vendors. Opening hours incline towards flexibility, depending on the time of day, or the daily reality of the owner or vendor – whether the delivery of live chickens did not arrive or their ill child at home needed care. Additionally, as noted by P2BF, many food vendors and *spaza* shop owners in the township start their day quite early, in order to service those who embark on equally long days and even longer commutes to reach their workplace. The relativity and entanglement, in Barad's sense (2007), of time and space is embedded in the fried "matter" of *amagwinya* that fuel the eater's labour, usually involving some form of service industry. A fried piece of dough considered in this way is not only food (or matter), but in its entanglement with early morning hours and the movement of the taxi – and ultimately its ingestion to provide the energy to clean, serve or smile at others – a piece of dough becomes an example of complexity, an intra-action, as it is part of a network of foodways as experienced in the margins.

This entanglement also manifests in the often confusing geographic appearance, to an outsider, of Kayamandi's streets and the location of its foodways. Finding these sites beyond the above-mentioned taxi hub, especially the *spazas* and *shebeens*, was often only possible with local guidance. The entanglement of

the geography of foodways with its sensory interpretation was most readily observed during my walking observations and interviews with some participants. It was during these wanderings through the township with participants that I was able to sense the mobility and modalities of foodways, as my own body became a point of engagement. Tim Ingold argues that the act of walking is crucial to how we perceive an environment, "For it is surely through our feet, in contact with the ground (albeit mediated by footwear), that we are most fundamentally and continually 'in touch' with our surroundings" (2004: 330). Ingold argues that perceptual activity, such as fieldwork, is thus dependent on how we move through particular environments, where walking specifically allows for a multimodal and sensory immersion in space (2004). Most importantly, however, by walking in an environment, such as a township, a researcher is able to perceive how "landscapes are woven into life, and lives are woven into the landscape, in a process that is continuous and never-ending" (Ingold 2004: 333). It was through walking in Kayamandi that I was able to perceive how the lives of its residents are entangled with its geography – and more specifically how its foodways sites were in many ways determined by the complex relation between social and spatial intra-action. Through walking *with* participants, I was also able to engage to a certain extent in the sharing of a bodily language with them (following Shouse cited in Leys 2011, and Grosz 2008), whereby I was better able to interpret their own sensory responses to foodways, and not only my own.

From my privileged and Western-educated perspective, the way of operating according to the rhythm of daily township life was challenging at first. My schedules and timeframes, however, were quickly forced to melt into a new pattern. As I increasingly felt this rhythm, both during the interviews and the informal observations, I caught myself being less agitated, and more at ease with it. I became sensitive to its entanglement of time and space. Given this observed embodiment, I was better able to understand how food was "happening" in the community. In Kayamandi, the meaning of food and its happening occurred to a different rhythm than what I, perhaps, was used to, but once adapted to this rhythm, or entangled with it, I was better able to understand and tolerate it.

The implications of this clash in patterns of experience between insiders and outsiders to the community can be traced to the common misperception of negative difference in the foodways of Kayamandi and



Stellenbosch.<sup>100</sup> Central Stellenbosch is not only spatially but also socially considered the dominant “norm” and its formalised, Western-inspired and aspirational foodways system accepted as such by those both inside and outside its borders. The concentration of people, from both Kayamandi and Stellenbosch, that travel to the Stellenbosch commercial centre to access its supermarkets, fast-food outlets and restaurants is indicative of this view. In the margins of Kayamandi, however, it is only those that are fluent in the negotiation of township patterns of life that understand its mobile modalities – how to order a “washdown” at a *shebeen* or know when the fresh chickens will be delivered (or not). The difference in foodways literacy between the dominant centre of Stellenbosch and its margins arguably contributes to common misperceptions about those that speak its different languages, even if in reality foodways connect these speakers in many subtle ways.

Castells’s concept of the spaces of flows and places serves as theoretical verification of this disconnect in fluency in understanding systems of foodways in Stellenbosch and Kayamandi. Castells’s theory of the space of flows proposes that societies are governed by dominant interests that cause an asymmetry in social structure (2000: 445). In this context, Stellenbosch and its foodways is understood as a dominant force, a space of flows where residents from the centre and the margins converge in order to access the “norm” – restaurants, fast-food outlets and supermarkets – whether as consumers or distributors. The sites of foodways in Kayamandi, however, could be described by Castells’s notion of places, as “scattered, fragmented, and disconnected” (2000: 497). This interpretation was confirmed by P1BM, who described the informality of *chisa nyamas* in commenting, “It’s not easy to find where they specialise, where it’s like a *normal* restaurant” (my emphasis), and thus many people walk to the centre to access this experience in the dominant foodways system. The disconnect that women from the rural Eastern Cape with indigenous knowledge of cultivating and picking traditional vegetables experience in the township, where they are often unable to practise such skills, also illustrates Castells’s argument. This disconnect and asymmetry in the perceived experience of foodways between the centre and the margin brings into question how such experiences may be transformed, or perhaps even decolonised, given the dominant Eurocentric

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<sup>100</sup> I use the term “negative difference” here not to confirm a polarising relationship, which works against a posthumanist approach as adopted in this study, but rather to point out how this polarisation is commonly perceived in society through the observation of how people engage with foodways between the centre and the margins.

understanding of Stellenbosch foodways as described in Chapter 3. I would argue that, in order to commence such a transformation or decolonisation, the hidden entanglement between what is perceived as distinct spaces of flows and places of Stellenbosch and Kayamandi needs to be made visible (and sense-able), as a hybrid space which in reality connects communities through foodways.

Castells's parallel worlds of flows and places bring to mind Fanon's poetic proclamation to the marginalised, "You come too late, much too late. There will always be a world – a white world between you and us" (Fanon 1970: 87). Homi Bhabha interprets Fanon's words as the "belatedness of the black man" in modern time (Bhabha 1994: 236), which also describes the experience of the space of places – disconnected, fragmented and therefore belated. This concept of belatedness and disconnectedness also speaks directly to Appadurai's notion of the "ethnoscape" (1996). The disconnect felt by some women between the rural and urban realities of cultural life in Kayamandi, and the consequent feelings of depression (P4BF) this could cause, are also indicative of the cultural problematics of displacement in its definition as an ethnoscape. The notion of Kayamandi as an ethnoscape is also reflected in the common perception of its own residents that the township is a "pit-stop", a temporary reality. Many of my conversations and interviews with local residents at some point landed on the subject of the future, whereupon a wish to return to the Eastern Cape, or Somalia, or Zimbabwe was often expressed (see also Ramphela 2002: 154). The perspective of the township as a "pit-stop" is further complicated by (mostly non-African) tourists eager to catch a glimpse of, however not dwell in, township life, as is indicated by the growth of township tourism in Kayamandi. This is contrasted by the fulfilled desire of a white family, as evidenced by P3WF, to make a commensal home in the township as an attempt at a more permanent, everyday act of tolerance or cross-cultural interaction, which provides an altogether different perspective to the ethnoscape.

Given the complexity, then, of negotiating foodways within the ethnoscape of Kayamandi, as a space of places, informed by daily patterns which are continuously in flux, a translation between the centre and the margin proves challenging. To bridge Fanon's "white world" between these communities' experiences of foodways, a critical translation thereof (following Bhabha 1994), is necessary. By a critical translation I mean a sharing of foodways fluency from the margin to the centre (and back) that makes visible its fluid



entanglement, and diffuses the perceived Eurocentric or Western dominance of the foodways system in the centre. A critical translation, in this context, could be valuable to the creation of new and hybrid forms of cross-cultural interactions which lie in between dominant spaces and marginalised places where foodways are experienced.

Developing what Castells would term a “culture of the network society”, which is tolerant and affirmative of difference, would necessitate such a translation with the aim of creating connections between the spaces of flows and places (Castells 2004b: 40). A decolonisation of the space of flows by giving voice to the space of places forms part of this translation, as these processes inform each other, or intra-act, in Barad’s terms. The acknowledgement of the ways in which foodways places and spaces are entangled and how these relations inform their meaning, is critical to their translation and interpretation not as different, separate entities, but bound in constructive, relational difference (Barad 2007). Acknowledgement of entanglement, in practical terms, however, is challenging in a social context where cultural separation or “apartheid” is woven into the fabric of society. One participant noted the critical importance of translation of cultural life across borders in Stellenbosch, in recognising the challenging reality that “both sides are not understanding each other, and sometimes people intentionally don’t understand” (P20WM). I would argue that a critical translation of the experience of foodways in the margins, in the food “places” of Kayamandi, however challenging, is of vital importance to attempting cross-cultural tolerance and understanding, as a form of decolonisation of the dominant foodways of Stellenbosch. Moreover, a critical translation is perhaps necessary to bridge the cultural disconnect felt by residents of the township in relation to indigenous knowledge systems from which they are distanced in the urban context. A critical translation could assist in the reframing of traditional cultural practices, such as the cultivation or foraging of indigenous vegetables, that could find new expression in the urban context of the township, toward the establishment of hybrid cultural practices and foodways.

At the outset of the study, Kasi Kitchen was envisioned as a connecting point between the marginalised places of foodways in Kayamandi, following Castells, and the flows of foodways found in the centre of Stellenbosch. The experience of this partnership, however, made clear that the restaurant space, rather than functioning as a hybrid or networked *place* within the township, reaffirmed a dominant infrastructural *spatial*

flow and its consequent racial and class hierarchies. This in turn inhibited the development of a sociomuseological practice as defined in the study aims. The partnership specifically attempted to address the disconnect between the restaurant and the local Kayamandi residents, by investigating the ability of the restaurant to function as both a space of flows and places, so far as this is possible. The group interviews, consisting of me and the participants, envisioned to attempt what would most accurately be described as a hybrid place. In a way it could be interpreted as a critique, following Bhabha (1994), of the “old” Kasi Kitchen as an attempt to translate the restaurant experience into one which resonated with the local community. Bhabha frames critique as a translation, a negotiation towards hybridity. Critique overcomes oppositional binaries towards a more complex, hybrid understanding of space that cannot be defined in this case, as a restaurant, a *chisa nyama*, or a museum, but rather something in between. The conceptualisation of a museum-restaurant hybrid in the context of Kasi Kitchen through the process of action research was an attempt at a critical translation of the experience of foodways. The potential practice of sociomuseology which was to result from this process, I imagined, would resonate with the political nature of Bhabha’s notion of translation, as sociomuseology is inherently and intentionally political (Chagas et al. 2014).

Foodways is a complex and vast subject, entangling social, economic, cultural and political contexts, even though it speaks at its elemental level to a basic human need. Translating this complexity, through a sociomuseological voice, into the operations of a restaurant business proved much more difficult than anticipated. It became evident following the first group interview that a local restaurant as a concept was yet unusual in the context of Kayamandi, and was met with some reservations. In anticipation of developing the concept through the action research process, however, I remained positive that a community-led translation of the idea could yet transform the site into a hybrid one, to resonate with both local residents and those from outside the community simultaneously. Even though the collaborative process of the group interviews attempted integration of foodways’ complexity with the daily commercial activities of the restaurant, its implementation was neglected when financial and logistical issues took precedence. This is not to say that this change in agenda was unnecessary or ill-conceived; it was rather a reflection of the reality of running a financially sustainable food and drinks business that needed to focus on simplicity to work effectively. Most significantly, however, by focusing all efforts on the commercial development of the

restaurant itself, the complexity and richness of the other foodways in Kayamandi disappeared from view. I had initially thought that Kasi Kitchen could operate as a hub as opposed to a dominant player, integrating a network of foodways activity rather than packaging it into one location. The practicalities and logistics of operation, however, prevented its development as a hub, in favour of a township tourist destination. The decision, driven by the owner and investors, to return to the tourism-focused model and framing Kasi Kitchen as a destination, was less influenced by the local participants, and more by the commercial considerations of the restaurant, supported by the consequentially racialised social hierarchy of its ownership. In other words, the restaurant model as a space of flows and its inherently hierarchical structure prevented its transformation and translation into a hybrid concept that could alternatively connect place-based sites of foodways in Kayamandi, and thus accurately reflect the complexity of its foodways. More importantly, the formalisation of Kasi Kitchen as a restaurant or food business and the increasing hierarchical tendencies of its operation devolved into a lack of engagement with the sensory capacity of cross-cultural interaction that could take place in its space. Among all the discussions of menu items and debates about kitchen equipment, almost no cooking or eating took place.

In considering the identified foodways and reflecting on the unresolved results of the partnership with Kasi Kitchen, the complexity of foodways' entanglement in Kayamandi became clearer. Foodways as an object of museological study is one which requires an openness to and engagement with complexity (Gurian 2017) – an openness to the entanglement of social, cultural, economic and political problematics embedded in the everyday, sensorially-determined experience of food. Museums or sociomuseological practices, then, could be considered for their ability to translate the complexity of foodways, which is relevant to every visitor regardless of their cultural, social, economic or political background, into terms that they both understand and can embody towards adopting a more tolerant and empathic attitude.

Sociomuseology is a museological approach that recognises this need for complexity, as it is both interdisciplinary (Moutinho 2007) and transitory (Chagas et al. 2014: 103), less inclined towards institutionalisation, and more aligned with grassroots, socio-political movements. Its vestedness in people and their communities means that sociomuseology is concerned with the well-being of people, and by implication the cultivation of empathy and tolerance. Sociomuseology as an educational platform for

foodways, understood in this way, makes theoretical sense as it could seek to both mobilise and empathise through food. The question arises, however: how does this educational platform take shape in practical terms? The partnership with Kasi Kitchen undertaken for this study provided the opportunity to explore one approach towards the development of such a platform. Where I had envisioned Kasi Kitchen as functioning as a physical platform from which a sociomuseological practice could be developed, the particular complexity of its racial and class dynamics did not create the necessary conditions for this to occur. Taking into account the learnings from the partnership, as well as a reflective (or diffractive) analysis of the foodways in Kayamandi where commensality is experienced, I revised my initial proposition of a location-based sociomuseological platform towards one which could be anticipated through a rhizomatic network of foodways sites.

Given the mobile and multi-modal character of foodways as described above, a rhizomatic, networked anticipation of foodways, which emphasises the relationality between its sites, would function as a relevant starting point for a sociomuseological practice to emerge. In order to develop a network of foodways which is a hybrid translation dissolving the polarisation between centre and margin, the relations between foodways sites need to be unpacked and recognised as fluid and changeable. According to Castells, such a networked capacity would require the reversal of information flows (2004a: 69), which could alternatively be described as a critical translation – the voicing of foodways from the margin to the centre and back, thereby subverting the notion of difference between them. Moreover, this reversal of information flows would also necessarily involve an activation of the relationality between foodways sites. This reversal of flows can also be understood through Deleuze and Guattari's description of a rhizomatic network, where "[t]here are no points or positions in a rhizome, such as those found in a structure, tree, or root. There are only lines" (1987: 8).

Practically, the concept of a rhizomatic network of foodways sites as a sociomuseological practice means that the sites themselves, when considered collectively and relationally, form a multi-location "museum". The movements and sensory experiences of visitors between these sites also become part of the museum itself, as a networked practice thrives on these mobile modalities. Hence, it is only when a visitor engages with multiple sites of foodways, moves between them through the senses, and engages in what Castells

would term “a reversed information flow”, that he or she can fully understand and appreciate the complexity of foodways, and thus of the Edible Museum of Kayamandi. It is through this bodily movement in the complexity of foodways that the visitor could ultimately achieve a transformative experience towards greater tolerance and empathy for cultures different from their own. Also, this bodily and sensory experience could in turn also facilitate tolerance for and acknowledgement of cultural traditions and indigenous knowledges considered to be disconnected from the township environment, thereby allowing the network to connect rural and urban cultural practices towards new hybrid forms. In the following sections, I outline how this conceptual understanding of a networked sociomuseological practice of foodways could be practically understood with reference to specific foodways in Kayamandi.

### **5.2.3.2 The aesthetics and authenticity of “African” food – diffracting the dichotomies of tasting culture**

Private/public. Formal/informal. Foreign/local. Modern/traditional. White/black. These dichotomies surfaced throughout the study and problematised the diffractive methodology (Barad 2007) I attempted to apply in search of an entangled result. More significantly, these dichotomies appeared to be cemented and difficult to challenge, as they were rooted in psyches underneath the seemingly fluid and flexible modalities I experienced in daily interactions in the township. Such dichotomies were most notably perceived in the tension between authenticity and aesthetics in the varying approaches to foodways, specifically when considered from the perspective of culinary tourism.

The notion of foodways aesthetics is defined by Long as the evaluation of the pleasure of food and its associated activities (2015d: 192). In the culinary tourism context, this evaluation takes place along a sliding scale in consideration of the pleasure taken in authenticity (eating something only the locals eat, or eating at a place frequented by the locals only, even if it is perceived as strange or challenging) versus the pleasure of aesthetics (eating somewhere beautiful or “safe”, even if it is perhaps fabricated) (see Richards 2002 and Fields 2002). The tension between authenticity and aesthetics in the context of culinary tourism is best described through the distinctions associated with cultural omnivorousness, as described in Chapter 2. Johnston and Baumann’s concepts of authenticity and exoticism are particularly relevant here. They argue

that foods are claimed as either authentic and/or exotic primarily through an “aesthetic disposition” (Johnston & Baumann 2007: 198). In the context of cross-cultural foodways, there thus arises a dialectical tension between the desire on the part of the culinary tourist to experience food aesthetically as exotic and/or authentic, and the converse desire by the local community, or the Other, towards an aesthetic of “modern” or “global” food (see Wilk 1999). Given that the proposed sociomuseological practice of foodways as attempted in this study at first sought a critical response to culinary tourism, aesthetics and authenticity were noted to be negotiated in ways that revealed the urgent need for transparency and diffraction of the cultural binaries that contribute to ongoing prejudice and intolerance.

The notion of the home in Kayamandi, and its multiple manifestations across the network of foodways, is a powerful site of differential engagement, where the entanglements between cultural binaries are made visible, and most importantly, are experienced sensorially. In the township, the home as a site of integration between private and public is evident in many sites in the foodways system. From takeaway vendors to *spaza* owners, to caterers, most either started their businesses in their homes or continue to use the home as an operational base. The definition of home, and the experience thereof, is thus understood as a complex entanglement between private and public space, formality and informality. During my interviews with individual participants in their homes, several residents or neighbours might pass through the room, adding comments or listening in. As many participants were interviewed during the normal course of business, some of these interruptions were made by customers placing an order, or coming to pay off their credit at the *spaza* shop. For the interviewees, what I perceived as “interruptions” of their home life were actually their bread and butter. In the case of the *spaza* shops, the conflation of private and public is not even experienced by the customer within the space of the home itself. Breaching the sensory space of the home through the transactional purchase of food in interpersonal contact with another (or an Other) is an example of a sensory and cross-cultural exchange through food, given that most *spaza* owners are of foreign origin and often subject to xenophobic judgment.

The sensory experience of home as evidenced by the homestay lunches subverts cultural binaries in a different way. In the case of the homestays, the role that the host mother plays in the dining experience is important – the personality and intimate presence of the cook welcomes the visitor to cross the threshold

between public and private. Once the visitor steps over that boundary, the dichotomies of public and private, local and foreign are entangled and, more importantly, problematised. As P5BF mentioned, the problematic of touching a white person in the intimate space of the home contributed to a transformative experience for her. The sensorial intimacy, as experienced in this case, is another way of describing the intersensorial entanglement between self, Other and the home environment. The concept of intersensoriality is useful in explaining this complex entanglement between private and public in the context of foodways.

Whether considering intersensoriality of foodways from a participatory perspective of tactility, in McLuhan's terms (2005 (1961)), or from the perspective of the cultural performance of synaesthesia, according to Sullivan (1986), the foodways of Kayamandi illustrate intersensoriality and synaesthesia in the erasure of boundaries between public and private. Whereas in a Western-influenced context, the slaughtering of animals on a public street would be considered inappropriate and unhygienic, in Kayamandi it is considered "normal". Bulging sheep intestines cooking on open fires at *chisa nyama* stalls assault the senses of those unfamiliar with the sight and smell of offal – this is an illustrative metaphor for the often challenging experience of private made public, inside to out. Foodways in all its messiness<sup>101</sup> "happens" between the home and the street, and the residents of Kayamandi are sensitised to this happening across private and public life, and the realms of the formal and informal. The *chisa nyama* vendors are a specific case in point: their aesthetic and sensorial informality is informed by their location within the street; however, by understanding these sites as hybrid restaurant "microcosms" (Beriss & Sutton 2007b: 4), the formal restaurant space is subverted towards a hybrid understanding thereof. By examining these phenomena through an intersensory perspective it is possible to recognise the fluid integration of the senses in Kayamandi foodways; perhaps it also shows the potential for learning that can take place for those less familiar with such a sensory-rich or sensory-entangled approach to food.

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<sup>101</sup> I use the term "messiness" explicitly, yet not judgmentally – "messy" should not be read as "negatively" dirty, but affirmatively so, for its sensorial illumination of a state which is positively disorderly, with the appropriate smells, tastes and textures that accompany it.



Sensory learning could also be described, according to Heldke, as the process of acquiring “bodily knowledge” through “embodied experience” (1992: 219). It is appropriate to consider the notion of embodied affect or intensity in a scenario of sensory learning in an attempt to diffract the dichotomies of private, public, formal and informal. Massumi describes affect as the experience of intensity as a “temporal and narrative noise” or even a state of “disruption” (1995: 86), perceived through the senses. It can be argued that affect or intensity is heightened in a context in which the body is unfamiliar; for example, the Western-educated outsider in Kayamandi. Food in this context would disrupt the senses with its foreignness, and I would argue one becomes even more sensitive to this “noise” in spaces where the senses need to work harder to interpret their foreign surroundings. Ben Highmore would interpret this disruption according to his description of social aesthetics, where “senses and affect bleed into one another ... every flavor has an emotional resonance (sweetness, sourness, bitterness)” (2010: 120). For Highmore, in social aesthetics, sensory perception is experienced as emotion. The disruptive sensory experience of foodways by outsiders in Kayamandi could thus result in interpretations of the township that are shocking, if they are unaccustomed to such intersensory experiences, which in their own context would be separated. On the other hand, the formalisation or aesthetisation of otherwise “messy” foodways in the township could result in a compromise of authenticity or exoticism, as it prevents sensory disruption, or challenging those unfamiliar with certain tastes to explore this messiness for themselves. Affect is thus arguably most powerful in sensory experiences that are authentic or exotic, exactly because of the feeling of sensory disruption that it provokes.

Given the disruptive nature of affect in the experience of food and the emotional feelings that it provokes, a sensory learning in a foreign context must tread the line between “shocking the senses” and what Highmore considers an engagement with “politics of the gut”. This politics argues for the sensitised and sensitive engagement with “new sensual worlds that sit uncomfortably within your ethos” (Highmore 2010: 135-136). P20WM mentions that in the context of Kayamandi, those unfamiliar with its sensory realities (such as tourists), “must have a proper briefing session” before engaging with those who experience these realities daily:

Where they [tourists] have to be prepared is the shock, when they see the poverty and the bad living conditions, and then how do you express that shock. Because it's just people that

live there, it's their homes. And the moment your home becomes an object of curiosity, it's demeaning (P20WM).

Thus, sensory learning or experience through foodways in the context of marginalised sensory environments, such as Kayamandi, needs to be informed by a “politics of the gut” in order to perceive the affect thereof sensitively and process the resulting emotional responses. Duruz similarly argues for such sensory learning experiences to be “fraught, complicated, [and] guilty” (2004: 441) in order for transformative understandings of the implications of power and privilege in foodways to emerge. Only then may the dichotomies that continue to separate formal and informal, public and private be entangled towards an understanding of foodways which could attempt to seek cross-cultural tolerance and understanding.

Another set of dichotomies that were revealed in the tension between aesthetics and authenticity in foodways relates to the historical legacy of racial separation – foreign/local and modern/traditional. The notion of “African” taste was one which was frequently negotiated in the study, and which pointed to an underlying problematic of polarisation in taste on racial grounds, specifically in those foodways related to culinary tourism. Township tourism, specifically, celebrates the idea of “ethnic” food in its African manifestation. Where Ray describes the popular interpretation of ethnic food as “poor, exotic, and different” (2014: 393), the aesthetics of African food in the culinary tourism context can be considered to appropriate these characteristics as part of its framing. However, the choice of dishes and foods is made within a framework of what is considered palatable from a Western perspective – those items that can be considered to suit foreign tastes are included, whereas those that may offend are left off the menu. Dishes such as tripe, sheep’s heads, chicken feet or any other type of offal would hardly ever appear on the table at a homestay or at Kasi Kitchen, yet are some of the most popular dishes enjoyed by local residents at *chisa nyamas*. According to Johnston and Baumann’s framework of exoticism and authenticity, those dishes are considered “too exotic” or “too African”, even if highly authentic, for the culinary tourist in Kayamandi. The “African” food aesthetic, in this context, notably excludes the extremes of the poor (where offal, heads and feet are considered the least expensive animal foodstuffs). Fields comments that “[o]nly the wealthy tourist can afford to travel long distances to taste the fruits of poverty” (2002: 40), but the irony of his

statement is complicated – in Kayamandi, the real “fruits of poverty” are selectively excluded to aesthetically frame African food according to foreign tastes. I note, however, that this exclusion is not made in cultural ignorance, but rather in order to serve food which is palatable to or tolerated by their target audience. Nonetheless these types of exclusions need to be interrogated for the broader cultural exclusions which they enact.

Complexity as revealed in diverse tastes defined by race and culture in the foodways system was particularly problematic as found during the partnership with Kasi Kitchen. The exercises in menu development at different stages of this process were probably one of the most revealing aspects of the research, as they not only highlighted the commonly held perceptions of difference between racial groups and taste preferences, but the difficulty of moving beyond these perceptions. The menus almost functioned as affirmations of negative difference, polarising traditional versus “modern” flavours. This oppositional approach was made evident in comments such as, “When we make food, I believe that, when it is black people, I’m sorry guys I must be honest, we know what we eat, if it’s ‘*boere maak ’n plan*’, it’s different food that they want. If it’s English, then it’s different” (P17BM). Another participant confirmed that “[i]f you come from Cape Town or Stellenbosch town, and say ‘I want to go to Kayamandi’, you want to eat something that is not in town” (P22BM). When considering the later focus on takeaways for local teachers, however, it was said that burgers, wraps and salads would be preferable, because “[f]or our people you don’t have to go too traditional” (P17BM). It can be argued that the cultural affiliation of taste was so entrenched that it challenged the ability to conceive of a “hybrid” approach to the menu, which hoped to transcend such cultural biases.

In this process of menu development, the idea of “fusion” cooking was explored, in which traditional and modern flavours could be combined. Dishes such as “samp paella bites,” “*pap arancini*,” and “gourmet *boerie* rolls” were suggested as unique local translations of globally recognised dishes. Some participants in particular were enthusiastic about reimagining traditional dishes, such as “[s]amp and beans (*umngqusho*), stiff *pap*, *amagwinya*, African salad (*umvubo*) ... we want to take those dishes to make it in a nice way” (P18BM). The implication of this re-invention towards “fusion” cooking could be considered problematic. It could reveal an attempt to elevate or make “nice” traditional dishes that are not considered

appropriately aestheticised to appear on the menu. As Zilkia Janer writes, “[T]he practice of fusion is not free from power relations as it establishes hierarchies between the different traditions that it merges” (2007: 396). P18BM’s reflection on *umngqusho* is pertinent, as he reflects, “I’m asking myself why you don’t see something like *umngqusho* in a food magazine. Just because there’s no one who takes our traditional dish in a serious way” (P18BM). Thus, the argument for a “fresh” take on traditional African dishes, an aesthetic elevation worthy of appearing in a food magazine, could be considered an attempt to be taken seriously, and arguably of conforming to the accepted conventions of restaurant cuisine. Johnston and Baumann maintain that gourmet food writing is a major source for the enactment of distinction and status in food choices, as these texts assist in the exclusion and inclusion of foods through the establishment of culinary trends as “worthy” (2007: 170) of being aestheticised. This desire for African food to be taken seriously by the participant quoted above could stem from a prevailing perception, especially among the born-frees, that Western and Eurocentric (aesthetic) standards should be emulated. As one participant, who is identifiably a born-free, explained:

Eating pastas and all the other Western foods, it really makes me understand them [Westerners] even more, what they prefer, how they do things. For instance, I have actually adapted to that culture, because I cook that food, if I have money and time to myself. I’m not really into *pap* or samp and beans. Because I’m just not interested in it (P23BM).

His comments confirm Wilk’s proposition that “postcolonial subjects”, like born-frees in the post-apartheid context, show a “desire to know more about the world, to become more sophisticated, and acquire new forms of knowledge” (1999: 248), and do this, in part, through the consumption of Western or modern foods, to the neglect of that which is considered traditional. The lack of aesthetic texts, such as menus or food magazines by which to measure the sophistication of “African” food thus contributes to its abandonment by those in search of the modern, such as the born-free generation.

In the experience of this research, the menu as a concept itself proved to be an inhibitor to engaging with Highmore’s “politics of the gut”. Through the categorisation of dishes – either as modern or traditional – the potential of engaging with “new sensual worlds that sit uncomfortably within your ethos” (Highmore 2010: 135–136) boiled down to the option of choosing between items on a menu, rather than a sensitive

engagement with the complexity of meanings entailed by that choice. When considering how one's choice of food reveals a complex network of meaning, the menu, in providing a simplification of choices, prevents a transparent view of this complexity. To engage with the politics of the gut, as Highmore posits, the menu as a tool of negative difference, then, needs to be transformed into one that is affirmative in the posthumanist sense, and to reveal how traditional and modern flavours are entangled in complex ways beyond simple binaries of taste. Moreover, I believe there is a need for the aesthetics of what is considered "African" food to become more transparent in terms of what is included and excluded. Greater transparency could facilitate dialogue between differing cultural audiences on the subject of taste and preferences as informed by social, cultural and economic realities.

Fischler argues that, in commensality, "eating the same food is equated with producing the same flesh and blood", and brings people closer together (2011: 533). It is this supposition that is appropriated through the aesthetisation of "African" food, and that needs to be addressed and unravelled in the culinary tourism context. Gathering different cultural palates in commensality does bring people closer together, but, I would argue, it is the posthuman recognition of difference in cultural taste that achieves this, and not the consumption of *sameness*. A posthumanist approach to commensality would argue that difference in taste is only different insofar as it *relates* to the taste of others – in other words one can only judge a taste as different if one has taken the risk to taste it. Perhaps doing away with the menu as a mechanism of choice-making in taste would allow for greater risk-taking in commensality. Neither the *chisa nyama* vendors, nor the homestay mothers, nor the *spaza* owners present their visitors with a menu – hence, the necessity of the visitors to allow their senses to make the choice for them. This could be, to echo Heldke, one way to "enact anticolonialist resistance" (2013: 405) in foreigner-focused dining sites in Kayamandi – to resist the menu that functions as a systematised instrument of choice-making governed by the dichotomies of modern/traditional, foreign/local and white/black, and rather to dare to taste what is not on the menu.

However, the approach described above neglects to take into account the potentially negative repercussions of the emotional responses such resistance could elicit. Reacting with disgust to a plate of cow's stomach or a sheep's head would be counter-intuitive to the objective of facilitating tolerance through the senses. Hence the need to create an in-between space where such reactions could be

anticipated and informed through a transparent engagement with the social, economic, political and cultural realities of foodways. On this subject, Korsmeyer (in Korsmeyer & Sutton 2011: 463) argues that “vision is the habitual instrument to resolve the ambiguity of taste sensations” that could therefore assist in pre-empting reactions to tastes which may offend others in a cross-cultural encounter.

A rhizomatic anticipation, or visualisation, of foodways could answer this need for the creation of an in-between space, as it creates transparency and connects dichotomies believed to be different or opposing, and illustrates their interrelatedness. In terms of a sociomuseological practice as functioning through this network, there is an argument to be made, following Korsmeyer, for foodways to be visualised in anticipation of being sensed. When visiting sites for themselves, then, visitors would be able to decide – based on their sensory experience thereof – to what extent they want to engage. It is not expected that every tourist to Kayamandi would be willing to taste sheep’s head, tripe or chicken feet, but in pre-empting the sensory encounter, and subsequently allowing themselves to be immersed in the site itself, even if not partaking in tasting, the visitors already come to a much deeper and bodily understanding of the complexities that inform the network of foodways in the township. The smells, sounds and sights of each site – whether a *chisa nyama* vendor, a *shebeen* or a food garden – are all indicative of their place in the foodways system. These sensory capacities, however, only gain richness if experienced with others in social interaction. As Molz argues, there is a danger in relativising the experience of a foreign food only to the self, to neglect the role of Others in the transformation which takes place in sensing Otherness (2007: 85). Although wandering past the *chisa nyama* vendors in Kayamandi would certainly inform a foreigner’s sensory understanding of these sites, it is only in combination with social interaction with the vendors themselves that the transformative experience of a foodway is truly enacted, not, I would argue, necessarily in its tasting. It is only in conversing with the Somali *spaza* vendor that a South African resident could truly begin to embody and experience foodways as sociomuseological practice as they engage in a basic activity such as buying milk or bread.

Thus, I would argue that it is a combination of the visualisation, or anticipation, of foodways in their rhizomatic capacity within the broader system, the sensory embodiment within the sites themselves, as well as the social interactions that occur within those sites, where a sociomuseological practice of foodways

could be realised. It is the union of visualised or anticipated bodily and social engagement through the senses that contributes in a powerful way to bodily transformations that seek cross-cultural tolerance and understanding through the destabilisation of polarising cultural binaries. In the following section the social aspects of this sensory engagement are discussed.

### **5.2.3.3 Commensality through Ubuntu – dining with difference**

The social dynamics of foodways in the context of Kayamandi was one of my most influential learning experiences as an “outsider” to the township, as these learning experiences contributed towards my inclusion in the community. To cite Simmel, the commensal exchange between persons “who in no way share any special interest” (cited in Fischler 2011: 531) was illustrative of social dynamics different to what I was used to. Commensal circles and units were perceived as larger and more open, as is validated by the comment from P14BM, that in the township, “[o]ne cigarette can be smoked by six people. One quart of beer can be drunk by four guys”. During one interview, a participant noticed that her daughter was leaving the house with a bowl of cereal and milk. She explained that her daughter would exchange the cereal for a few slices of bread at a friend’s house, as each preferred the other’s breakfast food (P16BF). This casual exchange serves as illustrative example of the informality and flexibility of commensality in Kayamandi, that is noticeably not limited to close family but extends to larger commensal circles. This social dynamic is largely influenced by the close spatial proximity between residents – neighbours necessarily become close friends as they live less than one metre away and also share ablutions. As confirmed by Ramphele, “co-operation remains necessary because of the low levels of essential services” in the townships, where “households share toilets and water taps” (2002: 105).

In observing these dynamics through the lens of somaesthetics one can attempt to make sense of its complexity. Shusterman’s notion of the “art of eating” (2016) is arguably reflected in the abovementioned commensal practices, as it understands eating not only as an activity which not only sustains one’s own body, but has an impact on others’ bodies as well. I observed that, due to close proximity to others and an entanglement between private and public space, eating is hardly ever a private activity, but almost always shared. Given this intimacy, it could be argued that Kayamandi residents, due to this proximity to each



other, are perhaps more mindful of bodily awareness in the practice of eating – the somaesthetic “art of eating” is practised out of necessity due to the lack of private space.

These practices also seem to reflect a sense of community as embodied by the ethics of Ubuntu. The practice of sharing and paying for drinks in the *shebeen*, as described by P14BM, serves as example: “Not all of us work, not all of us have money, not all of us get paid. So it might just be one guy buying for all of us. It’s just that simple.” The ethics of Ubuntu affirms this sharing practice, as it requires individuals “to fulfil their duties and obligations to others ... in order to maintain social equilibrium” (Mkhize 2008: 38). These duties are often, then, economically grounded, but in other cases come down to social relationships, as in the case of supporting “your” *spaza* shop: “It’s about [the] personality” of the owner, regardless of his or her prices (P17BM). These somaesthetic practices witnessed in the context of commensality in Kayamandi, then, are informed by the particular contextual dynamics of its residents, specifically the close spatial proximity and the social intimacy and accountability which this creates. Recognition and awareness of these dynamics as informing commensality, in my own case, made a significant impact on my willingness and confidence to participate in commensal circles in Kayamandi. The intimacy and accountability witnessed and experienced in this case was heightened through the process of sensory immersion or “emplacement” (Pink 2009). The intersensorial and embodied experience of personal transformation in this study prompted me to consider the creation of an environment where outsiders or foreigners to the township of Kayamandi could similarly be transformed, through a sociomuseological practice.

The partnership with Kasi Kitchen was developed in order to create a platform for such transformative experiences through commensality. I imagined that a “museumified” educational component would be able, through the practical setting of a township restaurant, to create the opportunity for transformation for outsiders and local residents alike – even if I was unsure of how exactly this hybrid space would be conceived and perceived by its diverse audiences. It was assumed that the iterative action research process would assist the group in determining such a community-focused interpretation of a restaurant-museum hybrid over time. The realities, however, of the formalisation of such a space and its socio-cultural implications proved problematic to the partnership, and ultimately the sociomuseological practice it envisioned.

The process of formalisation at Kasi Kitchen indicated a need for engagement with the underlying phenomenon described by bell hooks as “socialization”. Socialisation as a practice of dominance, as bell hooks writes (2003), is embedded in everyday interactions, and is especially evident in relations across races. Socialisation in the context of a business, in this case a restaurant, is built into the fabric of its hierarchical structure – ownership, customers, staff, and service providers. The partnership attempted to facilitate a process in which this hierarchy would be restrained or even to a certain extent decolonised, in order to achieve democratic participation through the museum-restaurant hybrid. Upon implementation, however, the hierarchy was difficult to overcome, and resulted in those participants with ownership or investor responsibilities dominating decision-making, as well as those aligned with “staff roles” to step back.

Although this change in dynamics was not a result of bad intention, it had a significant impact on the decision to distance the study’s involvement from the further development of Kasi Kitchen. Addressing what Fraser describes as the different politics of social justice (1996, 2007) proved cumbersome to the practical functioning of the restaurant. In terms of the politics of representation, although all group participants were included in the dialogue concerning decision-making during meetings at the beginning, the weight carried by the white voices of those in positions of power resulted in feelings of domination and exclusion among other participants. In turn, this caused problems in communication between those participants and the owner, which often also stemmed from feelings of exploitation due to the unfolding hierarchical structure of the partnership. The various injustices, following Fraser, experienced as the partnership progressed occurred predominantly along racial and class lines, which was particularly discouraging given the underlying ambition of the attempted sociomuseological practice to engage communities across cultural boundaries. Ultimately, if social justice objectives across cultures could not be holistically attempted at an organisational level, its attempt at a visitor or customer level through a sociomuseological platform would be challenging as well as synthetic. To be clear: social injustice did not necessarily occur as a result of personal, intentional sensibilities of any of the participants, but rather was also embedded in the very hierarchical social structure of the restaurant system, which contributed to the experience of maldistribution, misrecognition and misrepresentation (Fraser 2007).

This experience, however, brought to light the significance of bell hooks's determination that in order to "unlearn racism" towards achieving social justice objectives, a negotiation of tension is often necessary. The process of negotiating the various interactions that form a part of the business of socialisation proved to be fraught with tense encounters. The owner, and later also some investors, often challenged the expertise of those in a "staff" capacity, which was perceived as hurtful and often racially and class-driven, although upon open discussion it was defended as a means of due diligence for the benefit of the business, with no personal intent. These encounters, often uncomfortable, did begin to challenge the way that participants, including me as the researcher, perceived their capacity to negotiate racial and class relations in both positive and negative ways. Thus the partnership with Kasi Kitchen, if anything, impressed on its participants the relevance, perhaps even necessity, of challenging encounters in working towards the objective of seeking social justice, and the difficulty of working *with* difference and *through* difference, rather than *against* it. It is through the subversion of difference, and possibly *with* difference (Barad 2007), that such difficult encounters can become transformative. More significantly, I would argue that, in posthumanist terms, it is important to recognise the bodily engagement with difference. Embodied "woundedness" (hooks 1990), as experienced through the affect of difference, translates to the tension of entanglement, towards personal transformation and reconciliation – these bodily impacts arguably allow for a sensory route to transformation that is informed by a confrontation with our perceived differences with others. This sensory approach to transformation is critical in the context of post-apartheid South Africa, where a pervasive interpretation of difference continues to create boundaries not only between our own citizens but also between those from elsewhere on the continent and local South Africans. As Harris argues in a discussion on xenophobia experienced in the context of spaza owners described earlier, "South Africans are unable to accommodate and indeed, *tolerate*, difference" (Harris 2002: [Online], original emphasis). Harris refers to the "isolation hypothesis" to explain this inability of South Africans to manage difference as manifested in the current prevalence of xenophobic acts. This hypothesis posits that the international isolation experienced by the country during apartheid emphasised the creation of strict boundaries, not only geographically, but racially and socially. She quotes Morris in stating, "There is little doubt that the brutal environment created by apartheid with its enormous emphasis on boundary maintenance has also impacted on people's ability to be tolerant of difference" (Morris cited in Harris 2002: [Online]).

In my study, the tense process of negotiating difference was part of the journey of attempting to devise a sustainable strategy for Kasi Kitchen as a space which sought to transcend social, economic and political boundaries as it aimed to bring together cultures across races in a post-apartheid South Africa. As the owner of Kasi Kitchen noted through his many years of experience in trying different models to make the space work, "As long as I do what I have to do, I keep going. As soon as we look [only] at the results, the disappointments become real. It's not pretending it's not there. But it's in order to actually have energy for the next time" (P20WM). His comment is an honest reflection of the many years of time and energy spent on involving different stakeholders to find a model that would be sustainable for the space, having experienced many failures along the way. Even though our partnership ended unresolved, the process that it set in motion of negotiating racial socialisation, in hooks's terms, prompted a re-examination of the sociomuseological practice, as it alternatively requires a platform that is open and flexible, rather than fixed in institutional or formal structures and the racial and class hierarchies that such structures uphold. This re-examination necessitated a deeper, sensorial analysis of the engagement with difference through foodways, as experienced from the perspective of diverse audiences and their motivations for partaking in these foodways, beyond the viewpoint of culinary tourism.

Sensorial awareness of commensal dynamics, in the context of my study, was primarily achieved through the interview process, and I probably gained some of the richest insights through the personal narratives of the interviewees. Following the theory of "doing-cooking" as developed by Giard, each participant's narrative in Kayamandi was understood as deeply informed by a complex network of influence or "montage of circumstances" (Giard 1998: 201). Where many participants were taught to cook by their mothers, one participant's mother worked in a school cafeteria, where as a child she was able to learn the art of preparing food on a large scale, subsequently informing her choice of practising catering (P5BF). Another participant, through his political involvement, subsequently opened a tavern that became a fixture in the social environment of Kayamandi (P13BM). It is through each of these developmental trajectories' formation into individual (hi)stories (Giard in De Certeau et al. 1998: 201) that these narratives frame the story of Kayamandi foodways. Whereas Mary Douglas argues that "[t]he meal puts its frame on the gathering" (1975: 255), I would argue that the narrative puts its frame on the meal.

In many cases, interviews were punctuated with painful memories or narratives associated with food. In the case of my interviews with participants surrounding *shebeens*, historical narratives of political struggle as well as the often excessive drinking habits of predominantly male township residents sketched a scenario that implicated alcohol in a greater culture of resistance. These narratives also pointed to a problematic engagement with gender and race in cross-cultural *shebeen* interactions, in considering the contrasting opinions about the impact of racial inequality between older township residents and those of the born-free generation. I interpreted these diverse opinions to reveal a possible distancing from a culture of resistance by the born-frees in relation to their commensal experiences in the *shebeen*, while the previous generation appears to struggle with the feeling that “[f]or us it’s too late” (P14BM). Although these opinions cannot be taken as representative of the larger population, I interpret these comments both within the context of the research and within the wider context of the complexity of foodways to reveal a necessity for engaging with diverse and often competing attitudes towards making meaning of foodways.

Hunger was also a recurring theme revealed in narratives as experiences of pain or discontent. In one interview, memories of hunger informed a discussion about the politics of entitlement in South Africa, as the participant commented, “To a black person, the politics is about the stomach ... You’re taking care of your own, just like [President] Zuma ... Because you were hungry so much, you think this is your time” (P14BM). These comments illustrate not only the relevance but the urgency of using foodways as a catalyst for important and necessary dialogue towards the facilitation of aspects of social justice, such as tolerance and respect. As Sutton writes, “Deprivation in the present creates, here, a space for the bubbling up of memories of hunger past, of another kind of history from below” (2001: 168), which in the context of South Africa and Stellenbosch necessitates reflection, or rather diffraction, across cultural boundaries. The absence of food in this sense becomes a potentially powerful lens through which to illuminate the various social injustices experienced by different cultural communities in Stellenbosch and beyond. This aspect was notably illustrated by the participants’ experiences at Kasi Kitchen after the action research partnership, where hunger became a critical point of contention between the staff and the owner of the restaurant, “[b]ecause how can I be serving a plate, if I’m hungry in the stomach?” (P14BM). This question throws into sharp relief the incongruity of the restaurant as a social space within the township, which echoes Witz in his discussion of the Lwandle Migrant Labour Museum (2006). In Lwandle, the museum did not quite “fit”

within the narrative of the township, as much as Kasi Kitchen did not “fit” within Kayamandi, because neither the museum nor the restaurant could provide shelter or feed those it claims to service.

The deeper engagement with hunger also illuminated the reality of different social motivations in approaching foodways, especially in contexts where cross-cultural interaction is encouraged. As in the case of the “Reconciliation Lunch”, where I (and likely other privileged visitors) attended the lunch to listen to the narratives of Kayamandi residents, other attendees framed their participation based on whether they were hungry (P14BM). The expression of narrative, however, appeared to mediate these differences to a certain extent, in a way that acknowledged the problematic of contrasting or at times competing motivations, while also allowing the space for transformation to occur. This was evidenced by P14BM, who commented, “[Y]ou think you have problems, but then you hear around, twenty, twenty-five people, you think you’ve got it bad, then you hear somebody who has it even worse than [me]. So there’s also a sense of when you talk about things you feel better”.

Motivations for engaging in these types of commensal interactions, then, are flexible and can transform, most significantly through the social engagement that they invite. In the case of hunger, however, these engagements can also work towards negative ends, as evidenced by the experiences of the staff at Kasi Kitchen. Hunger as a sensory state, then, is an important motivating factor to consider in the social engagements around foodways as it informs these interactions from diverse perspectives of privilege. Admittedly, my experience of foodways narratives in Kayamandi were inescapably informed by my privilege, and never from a perspective of hunger, raising the question whether I could truly understand the meaning of foodways in the township from the perspective of many of its residents. In the same way, however, that I argue that tasting is key, yet only relevant once *socially* entangled with interactions that shape an understanding of foodways, hunger, even if not felt, can also make meaning, perhaps to a lesser extent, when socially engaged with those who experience it. Although during the research I did not feel hunger, I could at least attempt to understand its complex entanglement through a sensory and social engagement with the narratives of those who experience it, towards making meaning of foodways in the township, and consequentially towards the cultivation of empathy and tolerance.

The experience of foodways narratives points to what Forrest and Murphy describe as the meeting of the self with society, through the senses (2014: 353). Through the description of individual narratives, whether around a table during the “Reconciliation Lunch”, or next to a simmering pot at a *chisa nyama* vendor, I was able to “sense” the meaning of foodways, which informed my understanding of its role in the community of Kayamandi. This sensory emplacement, following Pink (2009), was primarily experienced through the skin, if considering Serres and Massumi’s interpretation thereof. In describing the skin as allowing the body to “mingle” with the world (Serres 2008 (1985)), the act of mingling can be interpreted as a posthuman sensory perception or meaning making, which is defined by a “common edge” (Serres 2008 (1985): 80) informed simultaneously by the feeling body and the felt environment, as well as the social interaction with other bodies. This common edge or mingling thus creates permeable boundaries between the self, others, and the environment, which Serres describes as “an active cloud, an aura” (2008 (1985): 303). This proposition is echoed by Massumi, who describes the skin as the primary medium through which affect, or intensity, is felt, creating a zone of encounter that is “filled with motion, vibratory motion, resonation” (1995: 86). Massumi also describes the experience of intensity as a “state of suspense, potentially of disruption” (ibid.). Hardt in turn argues that these experiences of affect “illuminate ... both our power to affect the world around us and our power to be affected by it” (2007: ix). Thus, the skin (and the senses) does not only allow our bodies to affect, but allows the world to affect us, and an awareness of this relational affect translates to an awareness of our bodily vulnerabilities as well as our bodily authorities.

In the context of this research, the encounter with intensity was most powerfully felt in sensory environments where the colour of my skin and my cultural background did not only have an impact on my experience of the foodways of the township but also influenced the commensal dynamics around my experience. However, as my senses became more familiar with the township environment and my body in its commensal dynamics, the feelings of intensity appeared to “mingle” with greater ease as opposed to being disruptive. My body became mindful of its “common edge” with not only the township environment, but also with skins that did not look like mine. This process and development of bodily emplacement and the affect thereof was most notably informed by the diffractive narrative practices of the “Reconciliation Lunches”. I describe these narrative practices as diffractive for their unique ability to entangle difference

and show how those around the table often shared many of the same insights, regardless of race, culture or class.

The act of eating as an amalgamation or entanglement of tasting and listening assisted in creating a commensal environment that is open to the sharing of narratives. The interplay between sharing and listening is a dynamic which makes the “Reconciliation Lunch” practice compelling, as it creates an atmosphere of reflection. Often there were pauses in the conversation, and it was in these silences that Lyotard’s notion of silence (1988) was experienced in an embodied way – in the instability or hesitation of putting something into words, worried about the effect that it may have on others. The fact that some diners in the lunch group gained confidence in speaking through years of attending is indicative of an embodied learning (following Heldke 1992) – how they have engaged with that hesitation towards an ability to express themselves in a way that embraces difference, or the *différend*, according to Lyotard (1988), without becoming its victim. This process of engaging in narrative necessarily requires what Braidotti would term a “dis-identification” of self – the intentional and unselfish abandoning of one’s own judgments in order to be fragile and open to those of others (2013: 168). The name “Reconciliation Lunch” is important in the experience that it asks of its participants: to eat (listen and taste) and share, and thereby to reconcile opinions and attitudes about life in both Kayamandi and Stellenbosch, and ultimately, to possibly be transformed.

This reconciliatory process and the fragility it necessitates often results in a confrontation with difficult questions. The weekly theme discussed at the “Reconciliation Lunches” I attended was often one which challenged participants to confront such painful moments, which were often awkward or tense. The act of eating (tasting and listening), however, assisted in diffusing such moments, and helped to facilitate difficult conversations. Chewing on food as well as ideas allowed for reflection and digestion, both physical and emotional. Chewing, in this context, could be seen as a critical act, as bell hooks suggests – it allows one to face fear, relish differences (through tasting and listening) and thus draw each other closer in “meaningful community” (2003: 197), through the sharing of narrative. The confrontation of tense and awkward situations caused by the politics of cultural (mis)recognition, in Fraser’s terms (1996), is arguably essential to encourage cross-cultural tolerance and understanding as a form of social justice.



At the time of my study it was clear that the “Reconciliation Lunch” in Kayamandi served as a platform for such confrontation, albeit in a sensory or affective way, through the critical act of chewing in commensality. The intimacy of the home environment where the Lunch took place was also important in this encounter. It allowed for a “safe” space for confrontation with difference that not many other public or formal sites of foodways could offer. The “Reconciliation Lunch” offered, in its own, affective way, a political experience of foodways that challenged preconceptions and promoted attitudes of tolerance through the expression of narratives. As one participant reflected, “[Food] doesn’t make the gap better, but it does make the relations [better]. Food is what brought us there” (P14BM). By putting food on the table, a connection was made between the hungry and the curious, regardless of their motivation for taking a seat. The entanglement between food, hunger, curiosity, and privilege was enacted, however, only through the social engagement that occurred at the table.

The “Reconciliation Lunch” could be unsettling for many who are not used to or prepared for the affective and subsequently emotional confrontation that its practice brings. Similarly, foreign visitors to Kayamandi may find the tripe or *smileys* served by the *chisa nyama* vendors sensorially challenging, resulting in a negative interpretation of their experience in the township. A white female foreigner may not have a good time in a *shebeen*, when accompanied by men who make comments in isiXhosa, which she senses are directed at her but does not understand. A negotiation with sensory disruption is difficult, and requires an approach that is sensitive to the varying degrees in which those willing to engage in this process are able to do so. Just as museums need to engage with different audiences in their institutional capacity, a sociomuseological practice needs to take into account the complexity of experience of different actors in this practice.

The visualisation and anticipation of such a practice as a network allows for varying accessible entry points to the system of foodways in Kayamandi. By creating a holistic view of the interrelated complexity of foodways sites in Kayamandi, visitors eager to engage therein can be given the option of levels of engagement, dependent upon their comfort level. For example, one visitor may find a visit to a *shebeen* to be too “risky”, and could opt for an easier entry point by first having a beer at Kasi Kitchen, and on a later occasion progressing to the *shebeen* once social friendships are established. Another visitor might refer to

the food gardens as a way of investigating further, in a sensory way, indigenous knowledge heard about from a grandmother. The communal thread that binds these sites together as a network through a sociomuseological practice, then, lies in the cross-cultural interactions and the sharing of narratives that occur between them in commensality. The Edible Museum is as much a collective interpretation (and translation) of foodways as location-based practices, as an expression of the intra-actions which occur between them through commensal exchange between visitors of diverse cultural backgrounds.

### **5.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The journey towards defining the Edible Museum through the process of action research was one that has raised as many questions as it set out to answer. The fact of foodways' complexity as a subject, and the process of attempting to engage with this subject sociomuseologically, revealed that the Edible Museum is an idea which cannot quite be captured in a museological destination, but rather finds its expression in the intra-actions that are generated by an attempt at its definition. In the context of Kayamandi, this study attempted to engage in a sociomuseological practice which could reveal the hybrid interstices of between-ness (between spaces of flows and places) where cultural dichotomies of taste are challenged and transformed through the senses, with the underlying ambition of seeking cross-cultural tolerance and understanding. The findings of this research led to the visualised anticipation of a rhizomatic network of foodways as a sociomuseological practice, which seeks to use the social and sensory interactions that connect this network as a starting point to increase dialogue and commensal exchange across cultural boundaries.



## CHAPTER 6 — CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

Given the findings and discussion as presented in the previous chapter, I will now conclude with a synthesis of the factual and conceptual conclusions and implications. The contribution of this research to the field of museology is emphasised in this concluding chapter. Finally, I provide a critique of the research and discuss potential areas for future research.

The research topic was chosen to contribute to a museological perspective of foodways that extends beyond a sensory pedagogical approach to engage with its complexity through a sociomuseological approach, given the transformative goals of sociomuseology as a movement (Chagas et al. 2014; Santos 2010, 2003). Although in some cases multisensorial engagement as a practice has diversified museum experiences on subjects related to food (see Levent & Mihalache 2017a; Gothie 2015; Mihalache 2016, 2014), I observed additional layers of complexity that needed further investigation, which could make transparent the entangled problematics of foodways systems in the museum context, as experienced between its visitors. I asked, to quote Irina Mihalache, “Can tasting and eating as everyday practices be co-opted to educate and encourage visitors to think reflectively about what they eat and how their taste constructs stereotypes and ideas about other communities and cultures?” (2014: 203) – or, even more radically, could these everyday practices be used to prompt transformation in visitors towards becoming more tolerant and understanding of cultures other than their own?

The choice of research context within a marginalised township community provided a specific dynamic that engaged with the potential for this approach to facilitate tolerance and cross-cultural understanding in a post-apartheid South African environment. Stellenbosch, given its Eurocentric food heritage and culinary industry, and the pervasive inequalities experienced between its centre and margins, served as an ideal, yet challenging point of engagement. The subversion of entrenched cultural dichotomies of Otherness as supported by the experience of food (see Heldke 2013; Highmore 2010; Molz 2007; Duruz 2004) between the centre and margin was a key consideration towards the conceptualisation of a sociomuseological approach to its foodways. The township of Kayamandi, through an identification and investigation of its

foodways, presented unique opportunities for such subversion, given the diverse motivations of those that seek to interact with its foodways, and how these foodways are experienced sensorially in the local context. Consequently, the research sought to discover the possibility of implementing a sociomuseological practice, an Edible Museum, which acknowledges these foodways for their intra-active (Barad 2007) potential.

The research was designed as an action research study, and took place through iterative phases. Following preliminary observations and interviews with practitioners of foodways in Kayamandi, an action research partnership was implemented in an attempt at realising a sociomuseological practice. Participants in this phase of the action research contributed a locally aware perspective towards the redevelopment of the township restaurant into a sociomuseological space, and were involved in decision-making in the initial phase of its strategic development. Following the inconclusive result of this partnership, however, a deeper sensorial analysis and revisitation of foodways through further interviews and sensory interactions with participants was conducted to revise the concept. Seventeen individual interviews and ten group interviews, along with my own sensorially informed observations, interactions and wanderings with participants, were used as the data upon which the findings of the study are based. The analysis of the data followed an inductive approach and was conducted concurrently, as through each iterative phase of data collection and analysis the emerging themes revised and informed my understanding of the result.

## **6.2 CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS**

### **6.2.1 FACTUAL CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

Following the themes discussed in Chapter 5, I present the conclusions related to the sensory experience of Kayamandi foodways' environments or spaces, the food itself, and the social interactions between its foodways.

### **6.2.1.1 Conclusions related to the sensory environment**

I perceived the spatial dynamics of foodways in Kayamandi to be most notably experienced in the informal and flexible nature of its sites. In evoking the definition of Kayamandi as an ethnoscape (Appadurai 1996), its sites of foodways are marked by a flexible negotiation of challenging socio-economic and political realities related to marginalisation, which leads them to operate according to a less formal order than is found in dominant communities, such as central Stellenbosch. Furthermore, the integration or entanglement between private and public space was observed as an illustration of the synaesthetic or intersensorial relationship to foodways as experienced in the township, as specifically evidenced through the *spaza* shops, informal food vendors and homestays.

Based on this understanding, I recognised that a critical translation (following Bhabha 1994) of foodways experience in the margins was necessary towards an attempt at decolonising the dominant flows of foodways in Stellenbosch. The possibility of establishing a museum-restaurant hybrid in Kayamandi was explored as sociomuseological practice through a partnership with a local township restaurant, as a first attempt at such a translation. The action research partnership, however, resulted in the finding that the formal hierarchical structure of a restaurant, in its Western institutionalisation, prevented the achievement of a sociomuseological practice. The racial and class dynamics that emerged in this process inhibited the development of a democratic practice, which is vested in the well-being of the local community. It was found that the Edible Museum rather requires a spatial resolution that is embedded in the complex and variable environment of the township. Considering that foodways “happened” between spaces in a much more fluid and flexible way than anticipated (for example between the public street and the private home), a revised concept of a rhizomatic network was conceived from which to develop a sociomuseological practice of foodways in Kayamandi.

### **6.2.1.2 Conclusions related to the sensory experience of food**

The conclusion of findings related to the sensory experience of “African” food revealed several problematic dichotomies that supported the oppositional tension between aesthetics and authenticity. The dichotomy of necessity and luxury (Bourdieu 1984) in the township is not a simple binary relationship but gains

complexity when troubled by polarising notions of modern and traditional, foreign and local, especially in the context of consuming Otherness, as argued by observations of cultural omnivorousness (Peterson & Kern 1996; Bryson 1996; Warde et al. 1999; Johnston & Baumann 2007). These dichotomies are entrenched in the way that “African food” is aestheticised for the purposes of culinary tourism, as was evident from the examples of the homestays and the township restaurant in Kayamandi.

Beyond culinary tourism, the problematic impact of these dichotomies was also witnessed in the example of food gardens as urbanised manifestations of traditional knowledge practices, where these foodways could connect urban communities to traditional rural practices that appear inaccessible in the township. The generational disconnect between born-frees and the indigenous knowledge systems of their ancestors, and the gender bias associated therewith, pointed to possibilities whereby foodways in Kayamandi may be co-opted (to quote Mihalache 2014) towards a destabilisation of such cultural dichotomies. A postcolonial (see Wilk 1999) and posthuman attempt at such destabilisation could acknowledge the agency and ability of marginalised identities to utilise *difference* in taste towards a relational or intra-active expression thereof as opposed to one that is divisive or disconnecting.

I argue that cultural dichotomies of taste must be critiqued, in Bhabha’s terms, towards the conceptualisation of a hybrid or translated understanding of “African” taste in the township, which recognises its complexity as informed by the dynamics of marginalised socio-economic and political realities. I propose that through foodways’ anticipation and visualisation (following Korsmeyer in Korsmeyer & Sutton 2011), as a rhizomatic network, the aestheticised cultural binaries which govern “African” taste may be destabilised towards an awareness of the complex intra-action of social, cultural, political and economic factors that determine its authenticity and value.

### **6.2.1.3 Conclusions related to the sensory social interactions**

The perceived informality and flexibility of commensal patterns led to my understanding of commensality in Kayamandi through the concepts of somaesthetics (Shusterman 2016) and the ethics of Ubuntu. Most notably, my recognition and awareness, as an outsider, of the way that commensality functions in the township gave me the confidence to participate in these commensal circles. In the context of this research,



the choice of a restaurant as commensal site in which to attempt the development of a sociomuseological practice proved to be inhibited by the social dynamics that resulted from the institutionalised nature of the restaurant itself. As an institution, the restaurant followed a socialisation (see bell hooks 2003), which affirmed a hierarchical and dominant structure that hindered the action research partnership in its attempts to function democratically. This socialisation subsequently caused instances of social injustice, as Fraser describes (2007). These instances proved that the negotiation of foodways and their complexity, especially in the context of culinary tourism, is a practice that is often fraught with tense and disruptive encounters. Engaging with the complexity of foodways exposes many underlying or hidden social biases and assumptions, often without our awareness, exactly because food is a fundamental component of our daily lives (see Highmore 2008).

The interview process and learnings that emerged from the narratives of participants played a large role in cultivating my deeper, sensorially informed understanding of the underlying social dynamics of foodways in the township. Sharing a beer in a *shebeen* with a participant revealed both its harmonising capabilities, rooted in a rich commensal tradition, and its contested function as a marker of violence towards self and the confirmation of a gendered commensal practice. Hunger as a sensory state was unpacked through the experiences of staff members at Kasi Kitchen, as well as some participants of the “Reconciliation Lunch”, as a powerful motivating factor towards participating or rejecting cross-cultural interaction. However, the tension this sensory state caused between diverse motivations in such encounters was observed to be diffused, in the case of the “Reconciliation Lunch”, by the mediating force of commensal exchange through narrative. The practice of the “Reconciliation Lunch” prompted me to consider the actions of eating and chewing as critical acts (bell hooks 2003) in the process of attempting cross-cultural tolerance and understanding. Tasting and listening, through eating and chewing, were observed as critical tools of affect that could be employed towards the activation of sociomuseological practice of foodways in a marginalised context such as Kayamandi.

The potentially disruptive experience that such critical engagement with foodways through the sensory interaction with others could cause made it necessary to consider how such sensory disruption may be pre-empted. I proposed the visualised anticipation of a sociomuseological network of foodways, which allows



its users to transparently perceive its potential sensory disruptions and understand them, as mitigating adverse negative responses to such critical engagement. I suggest that if visitors to the Edible Museum are afforded the chance to prepare for sensory disruptions, they might be more open to the social interactions and personal transformations that may result from such critical and intimate sensory experiences of foodways in Kayamandi.

### 6.2.2 CONCEPTUAL CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The disruptive nature of sensory interactions among people, environments, and specifically material food itself should not be underestimated. The sensory interactions surrounding foodways play a fundamental yet mostly silent part in our social, material and environmental well-being. Because these interactions are vested in our own and others' bodies, they are often overlooked for the powerful meanings they enact towards the upholding or dismantling of cultural boundaries. However, sensory actions and reactions, or as Barad would suggest, diffractions, are imbued with cultural meaning and are most notably present in our interactions through foodways, *with* others. It is in the relational movement of food through foodways that our bodies are affected and in turn affect others (see Hardt 2007: ix; Seigworth & Gregg 2010: 1).

It is through sensory disruptions, however, that we are faced with an intimate incongruity that touches our very core. The smell, taste, feel, sound, or touch of something (or someone) we did not anticipate can cause a diverse range of responses from delight to disgust. This incongruity imbues most bodies with fear; fear of ingesting, touching, inhaling the Other, of their body "becoming part of my own". Foodways, specifically, can illustrate this feeling in practical terms as experienced in the everyday context of how food "happens". The look or smell of a particular dish can be enough to prevent someone from tasting it. Conversely, the taste of something could at first be delicious, but upon seeing what it looks like, could provoke distaste.

Foodways can thus make sense of these very intimate sensory ambivalences and incongruities in terms that are translatable across cultures. The bodily language which it calls upon (following Shouse cited in Leys 2011; and Grosz 2008), is not spoken but sensed; but, for every person the disruptions following ambivalences and incongruities are different. I would argue, however, that disruptions constitute a type of shared bodily language, a sensory register which most people recognise as they experience its

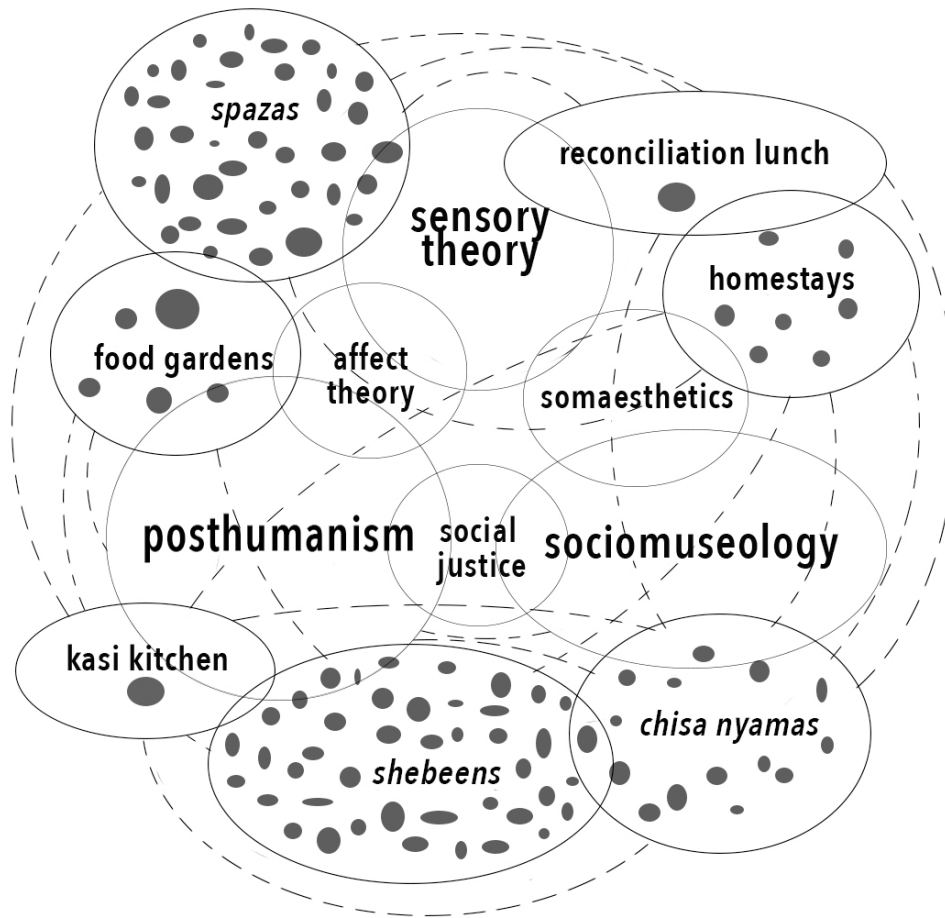
transformative effect (or affect). It is for this reason that foodways, in their implication in the everyday reality of every person, can serve to negotiate cross-cultural tolerance and understanding. It is through sensory disruptions that are enacted towards bodily transformations that foodways can be enlisted towards the facilitation of potential cross-cultural exchange and the development of a more tolerant and empathic society.

It is also specifically in this transformative potential that a sociomuseological approach to foodways makes sense. Sociomuseology is premised on the fearless museum, whose purpose is social, economic and political transformation (Chagas et al. 2014: 102). A sociomuseological practice of foodways, then, is dedicated to an engagement with the complexity of the environmental, social and material aspects of food and how this engagement can be purposed towards transformative encounters, such as the cultivation of tolerance and empathy between affirmatively different (following Braidotti 2013) cultural communities.

In the context of this study, where the transformative potential of a sociomuseological practice of foodways was at first anticipated through a centralised network, an analysis and interpretation of the empirical findings of the study led to the revision of the original conceptual framework, as presented in Figure 6.1 below. In the context of Kayamandi, it was found that a rhizomatic network more accurately activates what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as “an experimentation in contact with the real” (1987: 12). By allowing the sociomuseological practice to “live” through the intra-actions and entanglements *between*<sup>102</sup> visitors, the sites themselves, and the context of the township, the complexity of foodways can be better understood. Moreover, the sensory disruptions that can and should take place within this practice towards enacting transformations could be anticipated through the relational capacity of the lines that constitute the network. Through being able to visualise and anticipate the sensory disruptions which a body could experience, given its relation to and mobility through different sites of foodways, the visitor to the Edible Museum is better able to manage and interpret such disruptions towards a positive transformational experience.

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<sup>102</sup> Hickey-Moody and Page differentiate between “between” and “in-between” in arguing for a focus on the actions or intra-actions between objects and not the spaces “in-between” them (2015b: 4). Bhabha (1994) and Seigworth and Gregg (2010), although using the term “in-between”, also argue for a relational interpretation of this concept.



----- **Context : Global - South African - Stellenbosch - Kayamandi**

Figure 6.1: Adjusted conceptual framework

The relevance of the sensory in transformative cross-cultural encounters through foodways as illustrated in the context of Kayamandi above (Fig. 6.1) is crucial to the post-apartheid dialogue of tolerance in South Africa. As discussed previously, the rhetoric of the Rainbow Nation, especially as endorsed by the heritage industry, has contributed to a dialogue of transformation that is dominated by an erasure of difference (see Meskell 2012; Jamal 2005; Coombes 2004). This rhetoric has contributed to the construction of a multicoloured mentality that rejects an engagement with difference and the disruptions that contact with difference could evoke. National Braai Day is an example of the enactment of such rhetoric, where food

heritage is used in an attempt to unite different cultural communities while neglecting the negative ways in which these communities relate to food, whether through hunger or social exclusion. In contrast, the recent tendencies towards xenophobia in the townships, as discussed by Harris (2002) and observed in the context of *spaza* shops, are indicative of a broader culture of violence which is emerging, fuelled by cultural difference, as people struggle to come to terms with the social, political, economic and cultural realities of post-apartheid South Africa.

As shown in this study, foodways are implicated in a direct way in this tension between the dream of cultural cohesion and fear of cultural Others as it is emerging in our current context. It is in foodways' ability to speak through an embodied language (Shouse cited in Leys 2011; Grosz 2008), that I would argue it poses a novel potential contribution to the debate of tolerance in post-apartheid South Africa. By reverting to a language that is shared by every person ("every body"), regardless of ethnicity, gender, or class, foodways could pose an alternative avenue through which to explore the tension between respect for and fear of the Other. Moreover, the ability of foodways to engage with disruption, through the senses, and the way in which this disruption could be positively mediated through social interaction, is key. Hence the proposal of a sociomuseological practice, an Edible Museum, through which these disruptive sensory encounters with foodways could take place, towards the potential facilitation of a more tolerant and empathic South Africa. The Edible Museum in this sense is a conceptual or virtual (echoing Deloche 2010) notion, which raises the question of its tangibility: how does it practically take shape in real terms? It is in its perception as a *network of commensal activity* where the Edible Museum emerges - through meaningful, sensory encounters between people and foodways sites. This network, in being framed as a space of potential encounters which are meaningful, sensorial and educational, becomes then a sociomuseological model or framework which could be communicated in a diversity of pedagogical formats, whether physical or digital.

The notion of the Edible Museum, regardless of the format(s) it takes, could answer some of the issues raised in the South African Draft National Museums Policy (DNMP) as mentioned in Chapter 1. This policy emerged from an industry-wide recognition of the need for transformation within the museum sector, and to advocate for the ability of museums to contribute to "national development" (RSA DAC n.d.: 5) through

a renewed approach towards a service orientation (RSA DAC n.d.: 10). Although, as mentioned previously, governmental policy frameworks must themselves be critiqued and questioned for their transformative abilities, this museum policy document provides some useful parameters by which to compare alternative museological projects, such as the one proposed in this dissertation. The Edible Museum, as such, provides an answer to the policy's calls to act as a "museum without walls" and "without objects", and to communicate "from indigenous perspectives" through "alternative forms of preservation and memorialization" for the benefit of communities (RSA DAC n.d.: 48). The Edible Museum furthermore seeks to defend the principles of the DNMP, especially those stated as defending diversity, promoting equality and fostering social cohesion (RSA DAC n.d.: 12). On the subject of social cohesion specifically, the Edible Museum could be considered an example of a museum as an "agent of social change", as argued by the DNMP, where such museums aim "to increase social tolerance, appreciation for diversity, and working towards social harmony" (RSA DAC n.d.: 23).

Beyond its relevance to the DNMP, the Edible Museum is also a process that can critique and transform the museological practices of those museums that struggle to remain relevant in a post-apartheid, and, I would argue, posthuman, context where the necessity for cross-cultural tolerance and understanding through alternative modalities is revealed. The evolutionary and revolutionary potential of the Edible Museum in the context of the museum sector rests in the ability of its sensory practice to be embedded and utilised within the static spaces of museums towards transformative and disruptive sensory encounters among its visitors, collections, architectures and the broader communities that they service.

Although the notion of the Edible Museum as developed in this study is relevant to the particular post-apartheid context investigated, it prompts reflection as to its potential use in other geographical contexts where foodways could be explored towards facilitating cross-cultural tolerance and understanding, or other aspects of social justice. To this end, I envision the notion of the Edible Museum to be an adaptable conceptual model, as a sociomuseological practice. The Edible Museum as a practice is contextual and dependent on the complexity of each system of foodways as relevant to that context. Whether through employing action research or other methodologies that focus on inclusive research practices, the Edible Museum process could be employed by educators, specifically in museums, towards creating various

creative responses to the multiple understandings generated by a complex, tolerant, and empathic engagement with foodways. The results that could emanate from these processes could include, but are not limited to, exhibitions (digital or site-specific), workshops, publications, pop-up restaurants, cafés, food trucks, artworks, and so on. However, the Edible Museum would never be defined by any one of these outputs, but would perpetually re-invent itself across its various responses, or continue “becoming”, in Braidotti’s terms (2013: 193), as it continuously adapts to its contextual dynamics in ascertaining the search for transformative sensory experiences.

### 6.3 CRITIQUE OF THE RESEARCH AND FURTHER STUDY

A point of critique in my study would be in the choice of the partnership through which I conducted the action research. A typical action research protocol would have possibly allowed the participatory process to determine the project site, instead of selecting it advance. I also consciously chose not to discuss the museological implications of the project in exhaustive detail with the group, in order to allow the participants the creative ability to generate their own ideas of what the practice could entail. In choosing the commercial setting of a restaurant, I was also aware of the challenges that this choice could potentially have on the realisation of a sociomuseological practice. Given conversations with both the owner and other participants prior to commencement of the project, it seemed a viable choice as potential partner, regardless of the potential challenges regarding commercial or institutional realities. The opportunity presented by the site in its need for community-focused re-invention and its potentially practical result as a functioning restaurant was one that could also have allowed the concept to continue beyond the life of this study. I did not foresee, however, the dominant and disabling role that the class and racial dynamics would play in the development of the partnership towards the formalisation of the restaurant. These dynamics, however, opened up the need to investigate further the complexity of the social, political and economic issues revealed in this process.

It could be argued that if the partnership had been allowed more time to mature through the growing pains of establishing its business first, and social objectives second, the result would also have been different. The process of navigating the tensions experienced in the partnership with Kasi Kitchen, however, served to revise my understanding of a sociomuseological practice towards one that is better served not bound to a

destination in a centralised network, but emerges from the rhizomatic intra-actions between people, the sites of foodways, and the larger context of the township community of Kayamandi. Given this understanding, the Edible Museum emerged as a process, as opposed to an outcome.

In this regard, further research is encouraged to interpret the Edible Museum concept as an alternative museological format, both in Kayamandi and beyond. Based on the learnings from Kayamandi, and following the completion of the action research methodology of this study, I experimented with the creation of a digital output for the Edible Museum in this context. A digital platform would provide a relevant avenue through which to develop a supporting mechanism to the Edible Museum as sociomuseological practice of foodways. In my own experience, preliminary research in Kayamandi as well as a literature study of the context and heritage of the community made an impact on my interpretation thereof. Prior to engaging in my research, I was apprehensive not only about entering Kayamandi, but also about walking around in its streets, and partaking in its foodways. However, given my preliminary research, I was better prepared for the sensory interactions that I encountered, as my expectations were informed by that which I had read. Given what I perceived as the necessary role of an educational space to pre-empt the sensory engagements experienced in Kayamandi as part of a sociomuseological practice, I considered the notion of a digital platform to assist other incomers to the township, whether from abroad or central Stellenbosch – like me – in a similar process of preparatory self-education.

To this end, I have created an experimental digital website that attempts to set in motion this educational project, as an example of the type of platform that I describe. This website, tentatively titled *Kayamandi Eats*, can be accessed at <http://arcg.is/2hAXKNh>. This platform is an illustration of one attempt through which to approach an educational project for this context. The importance of the digital space is to act as an “action between” (Hickey-Moody & Page 2015b: 4) to mediate experiences of foodways in order to prepare visitors to Kayamandi for the potentially disruptive sensory engagement that occurs when immersed in a foreign sensory environment. The goal, with such an intermediary platform, is to educate visitors to the point where they feel comfortable enough to visit the foodways sites in person, to engage in sensory immersion and, importantly, cross-cultural interaction. From the perspective of Kayamandi residents themselves, such a platform could in turn act as a method for inscribing their own narratives into the



foodways of the community by contributing their personal stories towards making meaning of foodways. Considered in this way, the informational flow between visitor and resident through the network of foodways could become intra-acting, or relational, as it does not follow a specific direction. In this sense, the digital platform can be considered an extension of the Edible Museum network, in that the informational flow in the digital space would extend the social intra-actions occurring within the sensory space itself. The Edible Museum network, apart from this digital example, could be further supplemented with pedagogical outputs that engage with other aspects of a sociomuseological practice, perhaps more multi-sensory in nature or site-specific. This network may also be extended across communities like Kayamandi, within South Africa and elsewhere.

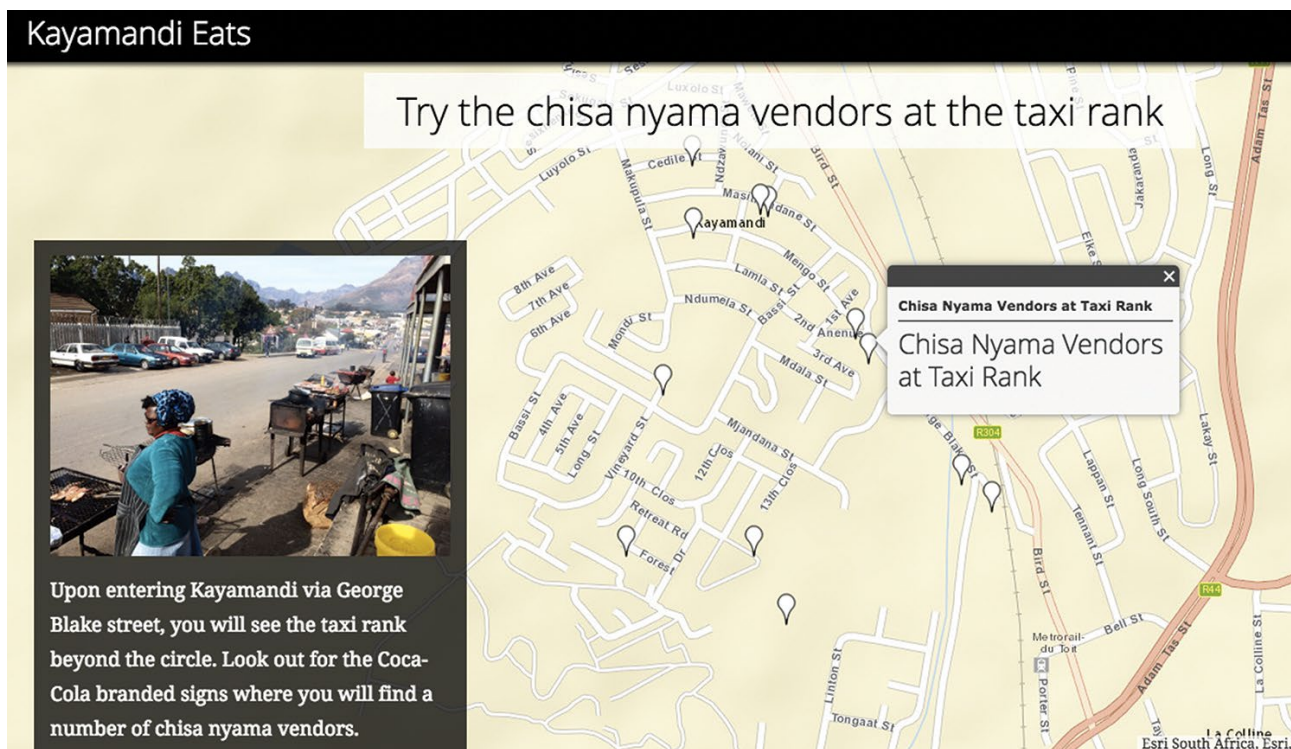


Figure 6.2 - Screenshot of the website *Kayamandi Eats*



Implementation of Edible Museum processes in other geographies and contexts could also reveal both different and possibly similarly nuanced outcomes or outputs, informing a growing body of best practice research. Such a body of knowledge would be of value not only to the field of museology, but also to the growing diversity of fields that investigate foodways from an academic perspective, particularly food studies and sensory studies. Moreover, the very practical nature of these studies and practices would be of potential value beyond academia, and could serve as inspiration to museum practitioners, educators and activists concerned with public education on the topic of cross-cultural interaction and food systems as understood through the senses.

## **6.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The main aim of this study was to identify and investigate the foodways of the Kayamandi community in Stellenbosch, and to explore the possibility of developing a sociomuseological practice based on its documentation. The action research study at first attempted to centralise this sociomuseological practice within the context of a township restaurant, which led to the realisation that the complexity of the foodways system rather requires a rhizomatic, networked approach vested in the dynamic intra-actions between the environments, social encounters and in the material foods through which foodways move. Furthermore, it was found that this networked visualisation or anticipation could sensitise individuals towards an empathic and complex understanding of the meaning of foodways by preparing them for the potentially disruptive sensory encounters that could emerge from their interactions with others in Kayamandi. The proposition of the Edible Museum functions as a sociomuseological approach that could be followed towards the possible facilitation of cross-cultural tolerance and understanding through food, both within South Africa and beyond. This study has therefore contributed to the expansion of dialogue concerning cross-cultural interaction and tolerance in the museological and food studies fields, through the novel perspective of a sensory approach to foodways, and encourages other scholars and museum practitioners to continue building on this dialogue through their own interpretation of the Edible Museum concept.



Figure 6.3 – Sharing a meal at a *chisa nyama* in Kayamandi

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**APPENDIX A: CODING IDENTIFICATION****Unstructured Individual Interviews**

Name	Code
1. Participant 1	P1BM
2. Participant 2	P2BF
3. Participant 3	P3WF
4. Participant 4	P4BF
5. Participant 5	P5BF
6. Participant 6	P6BM
7. Participant 7	P7BM
8. Participant 8	P8WM
9. Participant 9	P9BM
10. Participant 10	P10BF
11. Participant 11	P11BM
12. Participant 12	P12BM
13. Participant 13	P13BM
14. Participant 14	P14BM
15. Participant 15	P15BF
16. Participant 16	P16BF
17. Participant 20	P20WM

**Group Interviews**

Name	Code
1. Participant 1	P1BM
2. Participant 17	P17BM
3. Participant 18	P18BM
4. Participant 19	P19BF
5. Participant 20	P20WM
6. Participant 21	P21BF
7. Participant 22	P22BM
8. Participant 23	P23BM
9. Participant 24	P24BM
10. Participant 25	P25BF
11. Participant 26	P26BM
12. Participant 27	P27BF



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## APPENDIX B

### STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

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#### **The edible museum: Exploring foodways as sociomuseological practice in Kayamandi, South Africa**

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Elsa Vogts, PhD candidate at the Department of Visual Arts at Stellenbosch University. The results of this study will contribute to Ms Vogts's doctoral thesis. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because of your expert knowledge of Kayamandi and its heritage, and we consider you to be a valuable source of information regarding the foodways of Kayamandi.

#### **1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

This study will aim to construct a document of foodways in the Kayamandi community, with the objective of making the archive available to learners, students and the general public to both learn about food culture in the community and to preserve its culinary heritage – this archive will be integrated with the activities of a township restaurant.

#### **2. PROCEDURES**

If you volunteer to participate in this study, the researcher would ask you to do the following:

#### **Group discussion sessions held from November 2015 – March 2016**

- i. These sessions will commence in the month of November 2015 and will occur on a weekly basis (with a break during the summer holidays from 20 December 2015 to 4 January 2016) until early March 2016. Your commitment would be required to attend approximately seven to ten (7-10) group sessions of one to two (1-2) hours each. These would be scheduled at a time convenient for the whole group, but the researcher will endeavour to keep the time the same for every weekly meeting.
- ii. Based on agreement from the entire group, these sessions will be recorded with either video or audio equipment. Should there be objections to such a recording, notes will be taken through writing.

- iii. You may choose to keep your contribution anonymous, or to take credit. These contributions will only be for the purpose of informing the researcher's doctoral dissertation and will not be accessible to the general public, unless the contributor agrees and/or insists upon its inclusion in the public archive.
- iv. Once the study is finished, the researcher will present the research to all the participants of the study, in either exhibition or presentation format. The PhD dissertation could also be made available to those interested.

### **3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

This study has been designed to avoid inconvenience, discomfort and risk to all research participants. Participants are advised to keep the time commitments in mind when signing this consent form, as participating in this study will require time and active dialogue. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and should you experience any discomfort for whatever reason, you will be able to withdraw your participation.

### **4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

Although participants will not directly benefit from this study, the research project will upon its conclusion provide a valuable archive of information about foodways, which will serve as a beneficial educational and heritage resource for the Kayamandi community.

### **5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

No payment or gift will be awarded for participation in this study.

### **6. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained according to your wishes. Should you wish your contributions to remain anonymous and for your identity to be protected, your name or visual identity will not appear anywhere in the published (digital- or paper-based) materials. Otherwise all contributions will be given due credit. In cases where copyright is applicable, due reference and credit will be given in full.

All contributions to the archive as well as documentation from group sessions (including but not limited to audio, film, and photographic documentation and notes) will be kept in a locked cupboard in the researcher's office. No other person except the researcher herself will have access to these materials. Should you wish to access the recorded materials or notes, you will be given full access to the relevant recordings to edit or re-record as you wish.

Should a translator be necessary, he or she will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement. He or she will also conduct the translation as closely as possible, to be sure to communicate your message directly and without elaboration.

The results of this study will be reported in a PhD dissertation at Stellenbosch University, and will remain the copyright of Stellenbosch University. The resulting visual archive will also be presented to all the participants in the study in the format of either a presentation or exhibition, should they be interested. All confidentiality wishes will be honoured in the publication of the PhD dissertation and visual archive. Should the researcher use this study in any further publications, confidentiality wishes will again be honoured in full.

## **7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You may choose whether to participate in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still remain in the study. The researcher may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so, for example if you neglect to attend agreed-upon group sessions.

## **8. IDENTIFICATION OF RESEARCHER**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Elsa Vogts (researcher) at 082 550 0975 or [elsavogts@gmail.com](mailto:elsavogts@gmail.com) at any time. You may also contact the research supervisor, Elmarie Costandius, at [elmarie@sun.ac.za](mailto:elmarie@sun.ac.za) or 021 808 3503.

## **9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS**

You may withdraw your consent at any time and stop participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms. Maléne Fouché [[mfouche@sun.ac.za](mailto:mfouche@sun.ac.za); 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

**SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE**

The information above was explained to me by Elsa Vogts, in English, and I am in command of this language, or it was satisfactorily translated to me. I was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my satisfaction.

I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Subject/Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Subject or Legal Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER**

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to \_\_\_\_\_ [*name of the subject/participant*]. [*He/she*] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in English and no translator was necessary.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date





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## APPENDIX C

### STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

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#### **Rewriting history of the arts in Stellenbosch: Critical citizenship in community engagement**

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Elsa Vogts and Gera de Villiers, PhD candidates at the Department of Visual Arts at Stellenbosch University. The results of this study will contribute to the doctoral dissertations of Ms Vogts and Ms De Villiers. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because of your in-depth knowledge of Kayamandi and its heritage, and we consider you to be a valuable source of information regarding the arts and culture of Kayamandi.

#### **10. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

This study will aim to construct a visual document of the arts and culture of the Kayamandi community, with the objective of making the archive available to learners, students and the general public, both to learn about arts and culture in the community and to preserve its cultural heritage.

#### **11. PROCEDURES**

If you volunteer to participate in this study, the researchers would ask you to do the following:

#### **Documentation of cultural objects, stories and performances from July – October 2015**

- i. You will be asked to allow the researchers to document with photographic or film equipment the cultural objects, stories or performances identified by you as a relevant aspect of Kayamandi arts and culture. This documentation would only take a few minutes, based on the object being documented.
- ii. Should you feel uncomfortable with a photograph or video taken of you, we would like to document the object, story or performance through writing.
- iii. You may choose to remain anonymous during this process or to take credit by allowing us to cite your name with your contribution.
- iv. You may also choose your contribution to be excluded from the publicly accessible archive.

- v. Once the study has been completed, the researchers will present the visual archive to all of the participants of the study, in either exhibition or presentation format.

## **12. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

This study has been designed to avoid inconvenience, discomfort and risk to all research participants. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and should you experience any discomfort for whatever reason, you will be able to withdraw your participation.

## **13. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

Although participants will not directly benefit from this study, the research project will upon its conclusion provide a valuable archive of information about arts and culture, which will serve as a beneficial educational and heritage resource for the Kayamandi community.

## **14. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

No payment or gift will be awarded for participation in this study.

## **15. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained according to your wishes. Should you wish your contributions to remain anonymous and your identity to be protected, your name or visual identity will not appear anywhere in the published (digital- or paper-based) materials. Otherwise all contributions will be given due credit. In cases where copyright is applicable, due reference and credit will be given in full.

Should a translator be necessary, he or she will conduct the translation as closely as possible, to be sure to communicate your message directly and without elaboration.

The results of this study will be reported in two PhD dissertations at Stellenbosch University, and will remain the copyright of Stellenbosch University. The resulting visual archive will also be presented to all the participants in the study in the format of either a presentation or exhibition, should they be interested.

## **16. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You may choose whether to participate in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer while remaining in the study.

**17. IDENTIFICATION OF RESEARCHERS**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Elsa Vogts at 082 550 0975 or [elsavogts@gmail.com](mailto:elsavogts@gmail.com) or Gera de Villiers at 072 697 3129 or [gera.devilliers@gmail.com](mailto:gera.devilliers@gmail.com) at any time. You may also contact the research supervisor, Elmarie Costandius, at [elmarie@sun.ac.za](mailto:elmarie@sun.ac.za) or 021 808 3503.

**18. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS**

You may withdraw your consent at any time and stop participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms. Maléne Fouché [[mfouche@sun.ac.za](mailto:mfouche@sun.ac.za); 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

**SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE**

*The information above was explained to me by Elsa Vogts and/or Gera de Villiers in Afrikaans/English and I am in command of the relevant language or it was satisfactorily translated to me. I was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my satisfaction.*

*I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Subject/Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Subject or Legal Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER**

*I declare that I explained the information given in this document to \_\_\_\_\_ and/or his/her representative \_\_\_\_\_. He/she was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in Afrikaans/English/Xhosa and no translator was used/this conversation was translated into English by \_\_\_\_\_.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date